

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Reply to reader: the road to ending imperialist war

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U.S. threatens Iraq with war in ‘weeks not months’

UN ‘inspections’ report brings brutal assault closer

BY PATRICK O’NEILL
AND SAM MANUEL

President George Bush underlined Washington’s accelerating drive to war against Iraq in his State of the Union speech on January 28. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has shown “utter contempt for the United Nations, and for the opinion of the world,” he said.

Bush placed the drive to war under the banner both of combating “weapons of mass destruction” and the “war on terrorism” —a phrase that has been used to justify such acts as the establishment of a concentration camp at the U.S. Naval Base in Guatánamo Bay, Cuba; the detention and deportation of hundreds of immigrants, and the jailing of a number of U.S. citizens without charges or legal rights.

The air war that has already begun, with near-daily bombing raids in the south and north of Iraq, will be expanded to “the largest air war in military history in the opening stages” of the assault, reported the January 24 *New York Post*. In the first day alone pilots will fly 1,500 missions and hundreds of cruise missiles will be unleashed.

A key target of invading troops will be
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U.S. plane fuels up over Turkish-Iraqi border. Washington is preparing to expand near-daily bombing into “largest air war in history,” reported one newspaper.

Florida: farm workers, students hear Calero speak on fight against deportation

BY KARL BUTTS
AND RACHELE FRUIT

PLANT CITY, Florida—Immigrant farm workers, students, members of a local mosque, unionists, and others came to hear Róger Calero speak here January 20.

The meeting in this city near Tampa was a highlight of his speaking tour, Calero told the *Militant*. “It reminded me of the public meetings and fund-raising events in Minnesota and Chicago, where there was a representation of the labor movement in the room,” he said. “The farm workers in Plant City really put their stamp on this meeting.”

Calero’s nine-city national tour has been organized to win broad support in the fight to stop the efforts of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to deport him.

The Florida leg of the tour included a public meeting in Miami and a visit to the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees picket line at the Point Blank garment plant in the city (see article on page 9).

The Plant City meeting was sponsored by the local Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) and the Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA), a Florida charity providing day-care, English classes, and other services to farm workers. The event attracted nearly 50 people, many of whom work in the surrounding strawberry fields.

The local FLOC organizer, Leticia Zavala, produced a flyer to promote the meeting in farm labor camps and among participants at several English classes. It invited workers “to join the struggle against immigration policies that violate human rights.” The local RCMA director agreed to have the meeting at the day-care center, while both organizations provided refreshments and gave greetings and statements of support for Calero’s fight.

Calero, an editor for *Perspectiva Mundial* and a staff writer for the *Militant*, was arrested December 3 by INS agents at the Houston airport as he arrived from a reporting trip to Cuba and Mexico. Immi-

gration officials detained him on the grounds of his conviction in 1988 on a charge of selling an ounce of marijuana to an undercover cop. The INS had waived

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Militant /Sonja Swanson

Calero speaks at meeting attended by farm workers and others in Plant City, Florida.

Protesters condemn killings of Blacks by Pittsburgh cops

BY TONY LANCASTER

PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania—“The killing of fellow citizens is not acceptable,” said Renee Wilson to a rally of 175 people here at the Lighthouse Church January 20. “Those entrusted with a badge are still subject to the laws of the land,” she said.

Wilson was one of the organizers of the protest targeting police brutality called after the killings by cops of Charles Dixon, Bernard Rogers, and 12-year-old Michael Ellerbe—all Black males—in separate incidents in November and December.

Following the rally and despite the

freezing cold, participants marched through the business district of Mt. Oliver, a small borough that is encircled by Pittsburgh. Drivers beeped their horns in support as the marchers circled around the route twice.

The protest route included the scene of Dixon’s killing. He died after being assaulted by cops December 21 at a birthday party at a Mt. Oliver hall. Witnesses said the police beat Dixon, handcuffed him on the floor, and then used pepper spray. He died two days later without having regained

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Coal miners union faults company in Alabama mine deaths

BY CLAY DENNISON

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—A report released by the United Mine Workers of America January 22 details the safety violations that led to the deaths of 13 miners in the Jim Walter Resources (JWR) Blue Creek No. 5 mine on Sept. 23, 2001. It places responsibility for the disaster on the company, and sharply criticises the federal

Mine blast kills three workers in West Virginia
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Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) for not enforcing existing mining laws and approving the owner’s operation of the mine.

Jim Walter No. 5, as the mine is known,
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Washington rally marks Roe v. Wade, defends right to abortion

BY JANICE LYNN

WASHINGTON, D.C.—“Abortion rights are under attack; What do we do except fight back!” chanted several hundred women and men at a rally in front of the Supreme Court on January 22. The annual rally and vigil, sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW), marked the 30th anniversary of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* court decision that legalized abortion.

Also on hand were antiabortion demonstrators who tried to drown out the pro-abortion rally. Many had participated in a so-called March for Life of 50,000 people

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U.S. gov’t threatens Iraq with war in ‘weeks, not months’

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Iraq’s vast oil wealth. U.S. officials told the *Guardian* newspaper that special forces will “secure key installations at the start of any ground campaign.”

Bush, however, did not mention Iraq’s oil wealth, instead sticking to Washington’s stock justification for war against the Middle Eastern country of 24 million people—that it has developed and stock-piled “weapons of mass destruction.”

“The dictator of Iraq is not disarming. To the contrary, he is deceiving,” he said. Bush said he would put the issue of Iraq’s alleged “material breaches” of UN resolutions before the Security Council on February 5.

The State of the Union speech came a day after Hans Blix, the chief United Nations weapons inspector, presented a report on 60 days of “inspections.” Blix assumed a “tough stance” against Baghdad, reported the *Wall Street Journal*.

“Overall, the presentation added to the momentum for conflict,” the *Journal* approvingly noted.

U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell cited the report a number of times to buttress his argument that Iraq’s “time is running out.” Asked by a reporter, “does this report move the administration closer to a showdown with Iraq?” he said that Washington would “not allow the process of inspections to string us out forever.”

U.S. officials had telegraphed their stance toward the inspectors’ findings well ahead of Blix’s report. In an Op-ed piece published in the January 23 *New York Times*, for example National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice argued that “it is Iraq’s obligation to provide answers” about its alleged weapons programs. “It should know that time is running out.”

‘War within weeks’

“The message from the Bush camp: ‘It’s war within weeks,’” ran a headline in the *Guardian*. The January 24 article quoted a European official who said, “They’re talking about weeks, not months. Months is a

banned word now.”

The British government “was alarmed by the Bush administration’s sudden haste in moving toward a climax,” reported the London-based daily. “It was adamant that the decision to go to war should not be declared before Tony Blair flies to Camp David for talks with Mr. Bush” on January 31. The paper reported the reassurances of an “informed source” in Washington: “Blair is a good guy. They won’t want to do that to him. They want it to look like he played a part in the policy-making but the decision has been made.”

“We continue to reserve our sovereign right to take military action against Iraq alone or in a coalition of the willing,” warned Powell before an audience of representatives of imperialist powers at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Through such statements Washington has made it plain to its imperialist rivals—in particular the largest European powers of France and Germany—that their backing is not decisive in setting the date to begin the invasion.

Clashes with France, Germany

“It is the Security Council that must decide,” said French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin at a meeting of EU ministers on January 27. “There is nothing that justifies” a council motion authorizing war, he said.

Villepin’s German counterpart, Joschka Fischer, was more sweeping in his comments. “War is no alternative,” he said. “The inspectors have done an excellent job and have to continue.”

British foreign secretary Jack Straw reaffirmed London’s status as Washington’s principal ally, telling the conference that Baghdad was “making a charade of inspection,” and that its “time has almost run out. If this failure to comply continues, then Iraq will have to face serious consequences.”

Associated Press reporter Paul Ames wrote in his report on the meeting that “the EU is split down the middle on the issue,



Protest against U.S. drive to war on Iraq in Seoul, south Korea, January 25.

with Spain, Italy, Portugal and others leaning toward the British view, while Belgium, Sweden, and Finland are in a group closer to the Franco-German position.”

“I think that’s old Europe,” U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld said of France and Germany the previous week, as the debate sharpened. “If you look at the entire NATO Europe today, the center of gravity is shifting to the east, and there are a lot of new members.” A number of workers states, including Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, along with Malta, will become formal members of NATO in May 2004.

“This ‘old Europe’ has resilience, and is capable of bouncing back,” said French Finance Minister Francis Mer.

At a January 24 joint press conference with British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, Powell dismissed French and German opposition. “I don’t think we’ll have to worry about going it alone,” he said.

“We can already count on a substantial coalition,” senior *New York Times* writer William Keller confirmed in the newspaper’s January 25 issue. His article, entitled, “Why Bush Won’t Wait,” listed a number of U.S. allies, including the Gulf oil states, the Eastern European countries, the Turkish government, along with “the Brits, the Aussies, Italians, Spanish.... The Russians and French might even jump on the train once it’s moving, to protect their investments. Where’s the unilateral in that?”

The Turkish government’s agreement to allow the U.S. military to use its airfields and station tens of thousands of troops in the south of the country gives the U.S. war planners more options in their attack on Iraq, particularly in the north. A U.S. official said that Washington will pay Turkey \$4 billion “to help...with the economic consequences of its role in that war.”

The air assault in preparation will involve 500 to 700 U.S. Navy and air force planes, reported the *New York Post*. In its opening days, read the article, the air war will be the “largest...in military history.”

CBS Television reported that the air attacks laid out by Pentagon officials will eclipse their assault in their war on Iraq of a decade ago: “If the Pentagon sticks to its

current war plan, one day in March, the Air Force and Navy will launch between three and four hundred cruise missiles at targets in Iraq—more than were launched during the entire 40 days of the first Gulf War.”

Oil fields: target for ‘occupying power’

The U.S. troops in Turkey, like those invading from Kuwait, will have a specific target as they roll over the border, noted the *Guardian* newspaper on January 23. “The U.S. military has drawn up detailed plans to secure and protect Iraq’s oilfields,” reported the British paper.

One official told reporters that “a plan to protect the multibillion pound oil wells was ‘already in place,’ hinting that special forces will secure key installations at the start of any ground campaign.”

Iraq has the world’s biggest known oil reserves after Saudi Arabia, producing about 1.5 million barrels a day. That figure “could rise to 6 million barrels a day within five years with the right investment and control,” predicted the *Guardian*.

The big-business paper claimed that U.S. forces were motivated by “immediate concern about the environmental impact of having Iraqi wells on fire as happened in 1991 when Iraqi troops set Kuwait’s oil wells ablaze. In addition, it noted, “U.S., British, Russian, French and other international oil companies are already taking soundings about Iraq’s multibillion pound oil supply.”

British Foreign Office minister Michael O’Brien said on January 22 that “the charge that the motive is greed—to control Iraq’s oil supply—is nonsense, pure and simple.”

Asked by a *Boston Globe* reporter if U.S. companies would operate the oil fields, Secretary of State Powell said, “I don’t have an answer to that question. If we are the occupying power, it will be held for the benefit of the Iraqi people and it will be operated for the benefit of the Iraqi people.”

Vice-president Richard Cheney and Pentagon officials want to commandeer “revenues from the oil fields to pay for the daily costs of the occupation force until a democratic government can be installed,” reported the *Guardian*.

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THE MILITANT

Fight to defend affirmative action

Affirmative action is under attack in a Supreme Court case involving the University of Michigan. Won through the Black struggle, affirmative action programs are a weapon in the fight against discrimination that strengthens the working class. Read the ‘Militant’ for coverage of this battle and discussion of the issues.



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Berlin, Paris assert predominance over smaller EU powers

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

In concocting a joint proposal for the overhaul of the leading bodies of the European Union, the governments of France and Germany have asserted their economic and political weight over the smaller powers within the EU.

French president Jacques Chirac and German chancellor Gerhard Schröder announced their plans after a January 14 meeting. The central proposal affects the president of the EU council, a position that is currently rotated among member countries.

If Paris and Berlin have their way, the position will be elected by heads of member states. A separate president would be elected to the European Commission by members of the European parliament.

Representatives of smaller powers objected to the proposal and to the French-German collaboration, seeing behind it the threat of domination by Europe's big powers over the EU's leading bodies. "The Netherlands rejects these proposals," said Apzo Nicolae, the Dutch deputy foreign minister. The Finnish representative to the European convention said the plan would result in a "system of oligarchy."

Before the announcement, the French and German governments themselves had presented differing proposals. "In truth there was a real problem where the vision of Germany and France were not exactly the same," said French prime minister Jacques Chirac at a January 15 press conference.

ference.

The agreement, he said, shows "once again...that the French-German motor—essential for the construction of Europe—is functioning well."

The two countries have the biggest economies in continental Europe. Over the past decade, Germany's economy—almost 40 percent larger than that of its French rival—has lost ground against its competitors.

The two governments have taken differing approaches to the impact of economic slowdown that afflicts both countries in the push to closer integration of European markets. Paris has announced its intention to defy EU rules requiring member states to establish budget deficits below 3 percent of gross domestic product. Francis Mer, France's finance minister, said economic problems would prevent his government from complying with a European Commission ruling demanding measures to reduce the deficit.

Berlin has pledged to meet the 3 percent limit, saying that it will further cut government spending to do so.

The developments within Europe occurred at the same time as the two governments, using sharper language than previously, took their diplomatic distance from Washington's course in the Arab-Persian Gulf. In statements leading up to the state of the union speech by U.S. president George Bush, both insisted that the final decision to go to war should be made not

Dockworkers in Europe stage 24-hour strike



Thousands of dockworkers organized strikes and roadblocks across Europe on January 17 to protest European Union plans to allow shipping bosses greater control over the workforce and hiring at ports. A 24-hour strike on January 17 shut down operations at ports in Finland and Belgium. Workers blocked all roads into the Belgian port of Antwerp, the second largest in Europe, while the German union Verdi said 5,000 port and ship workers walked out at the country's container terminals in Hamburg, Bremen, and Bremerhaven. Unionists also took action in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Sweden.

by the U.S. government but by the United Nations Security Council.

Conservative *New York Times* columnist William Safire commented on the two powers' actions in the paper's January 23 issue, describing the French-German proposal on the EU presidency as a "stunning power play." Under it, he said, a "Franco-

German czar would dominate a toothless president of the European Commission."

Safire accused Berlin of aiming to "saw off the Atlantic part of the Atlantic Alliance, separating Britain and the U.S. from a federal Europe dominated by Germany and France (with France destined to become the junior partner)."

U.S. dealt blows to imperialist rivals in 1990–91 war

Below is an excerpt from the lead article in *New International* no. 7, "Washington's Assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World III" by Jack Barnes, who is the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The article is based on a talk given on March 30, 1991. *New International* is a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. Copyright © 1991 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

The assault against Iraq was the first of Washington's wars since World War II in which it sought to use its military might to deal blows, indirect but palpable, to U.S. imperialism's rivals, especially in Bonn, Tokyo, and Paris. The Gulf war exacerbated the conflicts and divisions between Washington and its imperialist competitors, as well as between these rival powers themselves.

While we know these sharpening conflicts already existed (every working person has been deluged by protectionist propaganda from the U.S. government, bourgeois politicians, trade union bureaucrats, and their radical hangers-on), the war brought them to the surface with greater force and accelerated them to a degree not seen in world politics for some time.

Coming out of World War II, U.S. imperialism emerged the dominant power in the world imperialist system, both economically and militarily. For a substantial period following that war the rate of profit, and for even longer the tempo of growth of the mass of profits, was rising in all the imperialist countries. As a result, competition between the imperialist powers over markets for commodities and capital and over sources of raw materials was buffered.

Since the mid-1970s, however, the combination of the declining rate of profit, halting growth in the mass of profits, and relative slowdown in economic expansion has precipitated growing, sometimes sharp rivalry among the imperialist ruling classes. The years 1974–75 saw the first worldwide recession since 1937, as economic interdependence among the major capitalist powers grew alongside their competition and conflict. Although the sheer size and output of the U.S. capitalist economy remains enormous, and while it remains the largest market in the world, its position as an industrial and trading power has slipped substantially in recent decades in the face of growing challenges from German, Japanese, and other rivals. U.S. strategic military power remains unchallenged, however, and is the main lever the U.S. rulers have to compensate for their relative decline.

'International coalition'

No power other than Washington could have transported and put in place the

mammoth order of battle necessary to carry a war to Iraq. While waged behind the facade of a broad "international coalition," the war was a U.S. government operation, with London's enthusiastic support and with Paris being forced to join in out of weakness. Bonn and Tokyo—still limited in their use of strategic military power abroad flowing from their defeat in World War II—took no part in the combat at all.

Through the initiation, organization, domination, and execution of this war effort, U.S. imperialism strengthened its control over Gulf oil reserves, gaining additional leverage over its rivals in Bonn, Tokyo, and Paris in the competition for world markets for commodities and capital. By throwing the biggest military forces of any other imperialist power behind Washington's war effort, the rulers in London successfully sought to guarantee themselves a privileged junior position alongside U.S. finance capital in this region, which was once largely a British protectorate but had been penetrated more and more by French trade, aid, and loans.

The commitment of combat forces abroad by the Canadian ruling class for the first time since the Korean War, and Ottawa's increasingly open and unqualified backing of Washington's foreign policy moves, indicate the pressure to grab more firmly onto the skirt of U.S. imperialism. The regime in New Zealand did the same, easing conflicts with Washington that have grown up there over port visits by U.S. ships armed with nuclear weapons. The Australian ruling class, as usual, made sure it was represented in Washington's armed entourage as well.

The relationship of forces that existed prior to the Gulf war among the capitalist powers in Europe has not been altered, but the national and state conflicts between them have been exacerbated....

Japan the biggest loser

Japan stands to be the biggest loser from the Gulf war among the major imperialist powers. It is the most dependent of all on imported oil, with 70 percent of its supply coming from the Middle East (compared to some 15 percent for the United States and 35 percent for Germany). Japan is thus most vulnerable to Washington's use of the "oil weapon" in interimperialist conflict....

Several examples from the outcome of the war in the Gulf illustrate what Washington was able to accomplish as a result of its military predominance.

First, U.S.-owned companies have already been awarded an estimated 70 percent of the multibillion dollar reconstruction contracts signed by Kuwait's royal oil barons. British-owned firms rank second (London finds the degree of the U.S. capitalists' greediness a little colonial, to say the least). Germany and Japan have been virtually iced out. General Motors is getting in on the act, replacing Japan as the supplier of thousands of automobiles to Kuwait for the remainder of 1991, many of which will be used to replenish the stock of cop cars damaged during the war.

Second, the U.S. rulers brought such enormous pressure on rivals to cover their "fair share" for the Gulf operation that if they actually pay up, Washington stands to make a "profit" on the war....

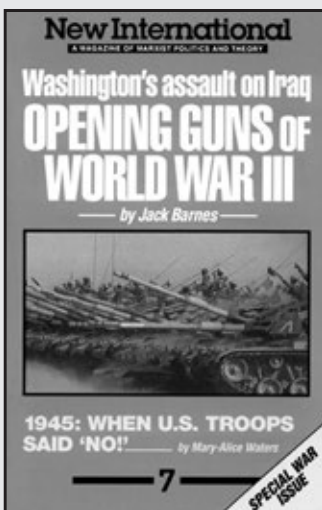
German and Japanese armed forces

One certain result of the Gulf war will be efforts by the German and Japanese rulers to strengthen their armed forces and to push back political constraints—both at home and abroad—on the use of military power beyond their own borders. The German and Japanese rulers are determined they will never again be in a position of forking over billions of dollars to their chief rival to help it strengthen its strategic and competitive power. Their resolve is all the stronger after having paid for a war that strengthens Washington's domination over a vital commodity, especially one that both Germany and Japan must import. Bonn and Tokyo have just been compelled to pay through the teeth to make the cost of their access to that oil more vulnerable to manipulation by Washington and Wall Street.

Germany and Japan already have large and modern standing armies—much more so in reality than their image in the United States would lead us to believe. Germany has the largest army in Western Europe, with 480,000 soldiers in uniform; it spends some \$30 billion on its military annually. Japan has 247,000 soldiers in uniform and an annual military budget roughly the same as Bonn's. Tokyo and Bonn will now seek to transform these armies into forces capable of taking decisive action in the world.

From Pathfinder

Opening Guns of World War III Washington's Assault on Iraq



By Jack Barnes
The murderous U.S. government assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars.

In *New International* no. 7. \$12.00

Order now from www.pathfinderpress.com. Please include \$3 for shipping and handling. Also available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Cyprus protests show support for unification

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece—Chanting, “Denktash will go, peace will come,” 60,000 people rallied on January 14 in the north of Cyprus. The antigovernment protest—the largest demonstration in the history of the Turkish-occupied north—was held under the banner of supporting the United Nations-sponsored plan put forward in November 2001.

While calling for the unification of the split country, the plan effectively codifies its division and the presence of British, Greek, and Turkish troops.

Many of the tens of thousands present used the occasion to express their desire for national unification and opposition to the dictatorial northern regime of Raul Denktash, which has so far refused to back the Annan plan, named after the current UN secretary-general.

The demonstration, equivalent to more than a quarter of the total population of the occupied north, was the latest in a series of actions that have become a forum for opposition to the government. It was accompanied by a teachers’ strike that, according to press reports, shut down all schools. Earlier actions in November and on December 26 were also very big, numbering about 20,000 and 30,000 respectively. At the December rally demonstrators were demanding, “Yes to the Annan Plan, Yes to the EU.”

The actions have been marked by the participation of a generation born after Cyprus’s occupation and division.

Protest organizers and participants took as a *fait accompli* the admission of Greek-Cypriot dominated southern Republic of Cyprus into the European Union (EU)—a move that was given the go-ahead by the EU summit on December 12. Such an incorporation was laid out in the UN blueprint.



Tens of thousands joined January 14 protests in northern Cyprus organized in support of UN plan. The turnout showed popular support for end to north-south division.

Demonstrators waved flags and banners with the map of all of Cyprus surrounded by the 12 golden stars of the European Union symbol.

The plan’s rhetorical stance in favor of ending the division of the island has raised hopes among many in the north that national reunification is on the agenda. They expect that adopting it will bring an end to EU and U.S. economic sanctions against the north, and hope that an end is in sight to the presence of tens of thousands of Turkish troops.

The protest organizers have promoted such expectations. “The Annan plan did not

fall from the sky. It is a middle ground, it is not ideal but the most realistic for today,” said Mehmet Seyis, the general secretary of the General Confederation of Turkish-Cypriot Workers (DEV-IS) at an Athens forum of Greek and Turkish-Cypriot speakers on January 21. Seyis is a leader of the Platform “This Country is Ours,” which helped to organize the protests.

“Production in the north is almost at zero, there are huge economic problems,” Seyis said. “These are problems for labor and capitalists too. We will all lose unless a solution is found. People taking the streets see this as a last hope. You see sev-

eral generations together. The old people come out because they fear that their children will be forced to emigrate, to leave the island. They want a united island, they want to keep their children.”

“The Annan plan is a historic opportunity to create a common struggle for a common homeland,” said Sevyol Ouloudak—also a leader of the Platform, at the same forum in Athens. “We want to live a normal life in a normal country with no fear of war, with no threat of emigration. We have been totally isolated for 40 years now. We Turkish-Cypriots don’t want to become extinct as a people.”

Nikos Katsouridis, a member of the Political Committee of the Stalinist Cyprus organization, the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), told the forum, “The political parties are united in accepting this proposal as the basis for negotiations that will bring a solution. Almost all Greek-Cypriot forces agree on this.” AKEL is the largest party in parliament in the Republic of Cyprus.

Plan’s real content

In its fine print, however, the UN-sponsored “reunification” plan is an elaborate institutionalization of internal division and foreign domination. It recognizes the right of Turkey and the imperialist powers of the United Kingdom and Greece to maintain troops there. Britain’s military bases will not be touched. Under a new federated structure, it legitimizes the division of the country into two autonomous regions, one Greek-Cypriot and the other Turkish-Cypriot.

According to the plan the federated state would be admitted into the EU. The presidency would rotate alternately between a member of the Greek— and Turkish-Cypriot communities. The highest courts would be presided over by nine judges—three from each community and three who would be internationally appointed. The north, currently occupied by Turkish military forces, would be reduced from 37 percent to 29 percent of the territory. Some of the tens of thousands of refugees created in the events of the 1970s would be allowed to return to their homes.

The strategically located island of Cyprus became a colony of Britain in 1878. London fostered divisions among the island’s Greek and Turkish speaking populations. In 1960 the country won formal independence. The British government maintained three large bases and, along with the governments of Greece and Turkey, the right to intervene as a “guarantor of the constitution.”

In 1973 an Athens-sponsored coup with the declared aim of “unifying” the island with Greece overthrew the government of Archbishop Makarios. Ankara responded with an invasion in 1974 that led to the 40-year occupation of the northern area.

Imperialist powers endorse plan

The Greek, British, and U.S. governments have endorsed the plan. U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher has supported the protests, saying, “People demonstrating in support of this opportunity to achieve peace, they are supporting the right thing,” he said on January 14.

The Turkish rulers, by contrast, have been divided in their response. Spokespeople for the Justice and Development Party government, elected last November, have indicated they favor the plan as a way to bring an end to the “problem” of Cyprus and clear an obstacle to Turkey’s eventual membership of the EU. Ankara’s application has been stalled in the face of opposition from the French and other governments.

On the other hand, officers in the armed forces, who play a prominent part in political life, have declared opposition, fearing both a loss of territory and a weakening of their military grip on the north. “Turkey would definitely face security risks if Cyprus becomes an entity out of our control,” said Rear Admiral Kadir Sadig to the country’s parliament on January 6.

According to the *Athens News* Ali Erel, the president of the Northern Cyprus Chamber of Commerce, said, “The Turkish-Cypriots have lost confidence in Denktash,” given his opposition to the plan, “and can no longer tolerate this situation.”

Natasha Terlexis contributed to this article.

Tokyo report: ‘reexamine’ U.S. relationship

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Registering the economic and political competition that Japan’s rulers face within Asia and the South Pacific, a report on foreign relations commissioned by the country’s prime minister has called for Tokyo to “seek responses” to the “advancement and increasing power of military forces” around the world.

Tokyo must “actively engage itself in world affairs,” write the document’s authors. They focus their concerns on the workers states of China and north Korea, and on their imperialist competitors, particularly the United States—the dominant imperialist power in Asia and the Pacific.

Drawn up by a task force on foreign relations and released in November, the document, entitled “Basic Strategies for Japan’s Foreign Policy in the 21st Century,” states, “The world is undergoing vast changes as the United States emerges as a hyperpower, China takes on new dynamism and the EU [European Union] continues to work toward an integrated state. The changes in international situations coming in the next 20 years will be greater than those experienced in any other 20 year period in modern history.... Japanese foreign policy needs to rethink its priorities in this new world.”

While advocating “further enhancement”

of the Washington-Tokyo alliance, the document calls for a “comprehensive reexamination of its relationship with the United States.” Japan must have “its own axis of coordinates,” it states; it is undesirable “that the Japan-U.S. relationship will become like the one between the UK and the U.S.”

Some 40,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Japan. The island of Okinawa, site of the largest troop concentration and scene of many protests calling for their withdrawal, labors under “excessive burdens” of U.S. forces, states the document.

The document expresses concern about China’s “military buildup,” describing it as a potential “threat to Japan and other countries of the region.”

Competition with China

The authors also talk of concern about economic competition from China. “The only solution to the hollowing out of Japanese industry due to Japanese companies’ direct investment in China,” they write, “is for Japan itself to become an attractive, high-value-added manufacturing economy.”

Suggesting one line of attack, the task force proposes the establishment of a “network of bilateral free trade agreements” with China, south Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other countries belonging to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Such a trade pact has been reached with Singapore and negotiations are taking place with the governments in the Philippines, Thailand, and south Korea.

Reporting on the Task Force’s findings, the *Financial Times* noted that the last time Tokyo tried to forge such a “borderless economic sphere” was 60 years ago in World War II, when the Japanese armed forces conquered much of Southeast Asia before confronting both local uprisings and the rival U.S. colossus.

The task force report urges the Japanese government to reduce its reliance on oil from the Middle East, from where it gets more than three-quarters of its petroleum needs—and turn its attention to reserves in Russia, the Caspian Sea, and Africa.

The document also reaffirms Tokyo’s long-term hostility toward the north Korean workers state, declaring that Tokyo’s objective is to “change the nature of [north Korea’s] political and economic systems.”

The revolution that produced the north

Korean workers state was born as a struggle against Japan’s decades-long colonial rule. There will be “no normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea,” the task force report declares, until the north Korean government “resolves the many problems...of nuclear weapons and missiles.” Tokyo has sided with Washington in the tearing up of contracts to supply fuel oil and food aid to the north.

With the imperialist stance of hostility toward Pyongyang—falsely accused of having aggressive designs on both Japan and south Korea—some voices have gone so far as to advocate the development of nuclear weapons. “The times have changed to the point that even revising the constitution is being talked about,” said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda last May. “Depending upon the world situation, circumstances...could require Japan to possess nuclear weapons.”

In response to those remarks, the north Korean government’s official news agency said Tokyo “should discard its nuclear ambition” and remember “the lessons of history drawn from the nuclear disaster suffered by it in the past.”

The task force also refers to the 13 Japanese citizens who were taken by north Korean government agents in the 1970s and 1980s. Japanese government officials have whipped up a campaign around the abductions to justify maintaining the cut-off of food aid in 2000 to north Korea.

“It is difficult to send food aid to North Korea now when there is strong public feeling or even hatred towards north Korea,” said Hideshi Takesada, an official at Japan’s National Institute for Defense Studies. Like Washington, Tokyo seeks to exploit the chronic food shortages in the country, which has suffered from years of crop failures and harsh weather conditions.

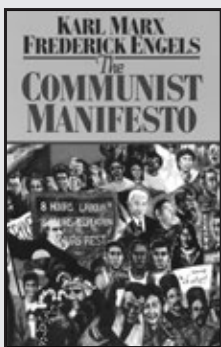
Chipping away at restraints

The approach laid out in broad terms by the task force fits with the policy course of recent Japanese governments. Over the past decade capitalist politicians have been chipping away at restrictions on the use of armed forces abroad. These restraints are embodied in the constitution imposed by Washington during its military occupation of the country following Japan’s surrender in 1945. Such restrictions include a ban

Continued on Page 15

from Pathfinder

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Coal mine blast kills three workers in West Virginia

BY TONY LANCASTER

CAMERON, West Virginia—Three men were killed here January 22 in an explosion at the bottom of a 1,000-foot air shaft. They were part of a six-person crew digging a new shaft down to the coal seam. Methane gas is believed to have caused the explosion, which is the worst mining accident in West Virginia in a decade.

The men killed were Richard Mount, 37; David Abel, 47; and Harry Roush III, 23. Two workers were hospitalized with second-degree burns and other injuries after deputies and paramedics went into the shaft to rescue them. Lacking the proper training or equipment, the first volunteer firefighter crew on the scene did not venture into the shaft. Mine rescue crews arrived at the site five and a half hours later.

All five killed or injured were from the coalfields of Western Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley.

The 24-foot-wide shaft was being driven for Consol Energy's McElroy mine, located 25 miles south of Wheeling in the northern panhandle of West Virginia. The construction crew was employed by Central Cambria Drilling, a mine construction company from Pennsylvania.

At the time of the disaster, the crew was within 60 feet of the coal seam, which is known to be gassy. Investigators said they were using acetylene torches and probably struck a pocket of methane gas.

Dangers for contract workers

The disaster highlights ongoing safety problems with Consol Energy and the contract company, and underlined the perils faced by contract workers. According to government figures more than 180 such workers were killed while working on mine property between 1990 and 1998. Half of those deaths were in West Virginia.

A wave of deaths in 2001 led to a study on mine safety by Davitt McAteer, a former official of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). He pointed to the safety hazards associated with coal opera-

tors' increased use of contractors and proposed that mine owners be held accountable for contractors' actions.

With 10 of the top 20 underground coal mines, Consol is the fourth largest coal company in the United States and the largest underground producer. McElroy is Consol's largest unionized operation and is slated for a significant expansion in production. Across the state line in Pennsylvania are the company's nonunion Bailey and Enlow Fork operations, the biggest underground mines in the country.

Contract workers were involved in 14 accidents at McElroy last year, which is more accidents than among the 400 miners Consol directly employs. The mine has been cited for hundreds of violations by MSHA officials including 850 in 2001 and 555 in 2002. One miner was killed in a 2001 accident.

Consol has had other accidents involving contractors in the northern Appalachian coalfields. In March 1992 three contractors and a Consol engineer were killed in an air shaft explosion at the nearby Blacksville No. 1 mine.

Four years later, after an accident involving contractors tearing down a preparation plant in the Morgantown area, Consol signed an agreement with MSHA to better scrutinize the safety practices of its employers.

In 2000 a worker for a nonunion contractor was killed at another area Consol mine, Blacksville No. 2. At the time the union was seeking to organize these workers, having won union recognition in a case with another Blacksville contractor.

MSHA's report on this death pointed to the failure of these contractors to ensure that new employees receive adequate training.

Contractor's dismal safety record

Central Cambria Drilling has had 11 other accidents at McElroy since 2001 and was cited for serious safety violations at Consol's Bailey operation in 2000. In six of the last eight years, Central Cambria

on top of and short-circuited a 6-ton scoop battery, generating sufficient heat to ignite methane." The roof fall, continued the release, "resulted from the mine operator's failure to adequately support" the roof.

Following the first explosion and injuries to four miners, "ventilation controls were damaged, allowing methane gas to

Workers, students in Indonesia protest government price hikes



Students in Jakarta rally January 24 against government cuts in subsidies for electricity, fuel, and other necessities. President Megawati Sukarnoputri said, "People must work harder and understand this unpalatable policy" in order to meet government austerity demands. In the face of protests and strikes by trade unions, the regime backed off some of the price hikes.

reported an accident rate far higher than the national average.

Consol vice-president Thomas Hoffman said, "I'm generally aware that in 2000 [the contractor] had a bad year safety-wise. But in most the other years, their safety record was certainly within the bounds of what we consider comfortable to do business with."

Teams of inspectors from West Virginia's Office of Miners Health, Safety and Training and MSHA are investigating the disaster. MSHA's head reported that they had yet to find any sign that the workers were performing the testing for methane that is required when torches are to be used.

State inspectors said they inspected the work site in October and November last year and found no problems.

Last year, after 22 miners were killed in mining accidents in the first eight months, the annual total reached 27. This is a low for mining fatalities and comes after mining deaths had been climbing three years in a row from 29 in 1998 up to 42 in 2001. What should be considered alongside the 2002 total is that 18 miners narrowly escaped with their lives after the flooding of the Quecreek mine in Pennsylvania last July.

Socialists launch Tampa campaign

BY HENRY HILLENBRAND

TAMPA, Florida—On January 17 socialist worker Rachele Fruit qualified to run for mayor of Tampa. Ten days earlier county officials who administer the city's elections had refused to accept Fruit's application as a write-in candidate in the March 4 election, on the grounds that the city charter does not have a provision for such candidates.

In a letter accompanying the qualifying papers, Fruit pointed out that in matters where the city charter is silent, state law prevails. In consultation with the city attorneys, Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections Pam Iorio decided to alter past practice and allow Fruit to file as an official write-in candidate.

Fruit's press release on the day of the filing stated that she "joins with millions of workers, farmers, and young people who are more and more standing in resistance to the world we face of economic depression and imperialist wars."

"Her campaign," continued the press release, "will explain that the problems of working people in the city of Tampa are not unique and can only be solved through a struggle against capitalism. We offer a revolutionary program to unite working people around the world in a common struggle that can take on and defeat our common enemy—the superwealthy U.S. ruling class—and replace their government with a workers and farmers government."

The next day the candidate, who is a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1625, campaigned with supporters among the 1,500 people participating in a rally opposing the U.S. drive to war against Iraq. The demonstration was held outside of MacDill Air Force Base, home of the U.S. Central Command, whose officers will take charge of the invasion.

build up.... JWR's emergency response was deficient and failed to protect and evacuate the miners."

Twelve miners, who responded to the accident without necessary information and direction, were caught in the second explosion about 55 minutes after the first blast. All 12 died along with a previously injured miner.

The explosions, read the statement, "resulted because of a breakdown in the federal Mine Safety and Health Act's (Mine Act) checks and balances...." MSHA signed off on plans, it explained, "that were inadequate to control the mine's roof, ventilation system and float coal dust as well as to evacuate miners in emergencies."

The union is calling for an independent investigation into MSHA, whose "failure to effectively enforce the Mine Act contributed to the operator's noncompliance with" federal mining laws.

One of the UMW report's most serious charges is that JWR bosses opened a ventilation shaft without prior approval by MSHA. For their part MSHA inspectors allowed this major violation of the law to continue without comment for five months up to the explosion.

The UMW is also calling for MSHA to hold a national conference to go over the lessons of this and other recent mining emergencies.

With the deaths of three mine construction workers on January 22 in an explosion in a West Virginia air shaft, the death toll in U.S. coal, metal and other mines stands at six in the first 22 days of 2003.

The UMW report is available online at <http://www.umwa.org/brookwood/brookwood.shtml>.

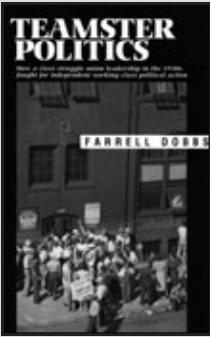
Clay Dennison is a member of UMW Local 2133 in Oak Grove, Alabama.

Union faults bosses in 13 mine deaths

Continued from front page

is located in Brookwood, Alabama. In a January 22 press release the UMWA summarizes the findings of its inquiry into the nation's "worst mining disaster in 17 years."

According to the statement, the union investigators concluded that "the accident occurred when part of the mine's roof fell



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IMF rolls over Argentina loans in fear of default

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

The International Monetary Fund announced January 16 that it would roll over more than \$6 billion in loans owed by the government of Argentina. One billion of the amount was due the next day. By postponing payment for three to five years the U.S.-based institution headed off another default by the crisis-ridden country.

Meanwhile, union actions and widespread street protests continue in response to the government's austerity drive. Under IMF oversight the government has slashed 30 percent of spending for social programs as well as wages and pensions of state employees since the economy entered a downward economic spiral in late 1999.

The January 16 deal followed warnings by Argentine economy minister Roberto Lavagna. On January 15 he told the Inter-American Development Bank that there was no chance of the Argentine treasury making the due payment unless it received the rollover agreement from the IMF. As its part of the deal Buenos Aires agreed to fork out the \$1 billion from its foreign currency reserves, and to reaffirm its commitment to the austerity drive it launched in response to the crisis.

Representatives of the G7 group of the seven largest imperialist powers—Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States—forced the January 15 deal through over the opposition of the IMF's leading officials, reported the *Financial Times*. IMF managers had panicked over "the consequences of Argentina's growing arrears for the credit ratings of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank," noted the London-based daily.

The governments of Italy and Spain, added the *Times*, "also seemed to be particularly concerned about the potential risk to their investments in Argentina."

The editors of the big-business paper accused Buenos Aires of "blackmail" for its statements that default was inevitable without some assistance. A number of other big-business journals, including the *Washington Post*, took a similar view.

2002: 12 percent decline in GDP

This latest development notwithstanding, the big-business press has lauded a modest upturn in economic activity in Argentina. Although gross domestic product slumped by nearly 12 percent in 2002, it recovered by an annual rate of 2 percent in November, reported *Business Week*, which described this as the "first year-over-year increase in 27 months."

In an economy that remains mired in

crisis, it is working people who are hardest hit. Some 40 percent of the working age population is unemployed or underemployed, for example, while inflation rose 40 percent last year.

Under the impact of economic collapse and the weight of public and foreign debt, Argentina has already defaulted twice on loans owed to imperialist institutions and corporations.

In December 2001 the government of Fernando de la Rúa defaulted on interest and installment payments on \$100 billion in bonds and loans. At the behest of the IMF, his administration had slashed the pensions and wages of state employees, raised taxes, and imposed a partial freeze on bank withdrawals. Massive protests greeted these moves, as workers and peasants blocked roads and organized street mobilizations. De la Rúa resigned in the face of these actions.

Eleven months later the new government of Eduardo Duhalde declared itself unable to pay \$800 million in World Bank debt.

In January 2002 Duhalde ended the 10-year-old policy of pegging the Argentine peso to the dollar, precipitating a 70 percent devaluation. The buying power of the workers' wages and the savings of retirees, shopkeepers, and others caved in.

Working people in Argentina continue to struggle against the impact of the sharply devalued peso, rising unemployment, and government cuts in social programs. In late January thousands marched in a two-day protest in Buenos Aires demanding increased benefits for the unemployed, wage increases to keep up with rising prices, and the defense of other social programs.

Organized by a coalition of forces including unemployed workers, retirees, and community organizations, they marched through the capital's elegant neighbor-

Garment strikers in Pennsylvania wage fight for contract

BY JANET POST

LYKENS, Pennsylvania—"We are striking because we are being treated unjustly," said garment worker Edith Barry while on picket duty here at the Libro Shirt strike. Members of Local 317-C of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) have been on strike against the shirt manufacturer since January 7.

The 89 workers, in their majority women, have been without a contract since last August. Through daily picket lines and other efforts, including a rally on Martin Luther King Day, they are reinforcing their

Banana workers in Nicaragua demand compensation from pesticide hazards



Left and above: thousands of banana workers in Nicaragua carry symbolic coffin during five-day march from Chinandega to Managua last November. They demanded that the government honor its pledge to provide medical help

and financial aid to field workers harmed by the use of a pesticide that caused sterility, cancer, and birth defects in children. The workers say they were never told that the pesticide, DBCP, was dangerous. Warning labels on the chemical drums were useless since they do not read English. The companies also ignored safety precautions and provided inadequate protective gear. "Walking through the plantations, we breathed in the vapors," said Manuel Guido Montoya, recalling that he and co-workers would get drenched in the chemical. Over the objections of the Bush administration, Nicaraguan courts have begun awarding hundreds of millions of dollars in damages to workers who filed lawsuits against U.S.-based corporations such as Shell Oil, Dow Chemical, Dole, Del Monte, and Chiquita Brand International. In December a Managua court ordered Shell, Dole, and Dow to pay \$489.4 million to 450 workers. The companies refused to take part in the trial and said they will not pay.

hoods to press their demands.

The caravan established an encampment at the Saavedra Bridge, and the following morning headed to the Venezuelan embassy to express solidarity with workers

there who confront a nearly two-month long boss "strike" against the Hugo Chávez government. The marchers then proceeded to the U.S. embassy to denounce Washington's war plans against Iraq.

strike and building solidarity in the area.

The workers voted to strike after the company pulled out of negotiations, and threatened to load half the cost of health insurance onto the employees. If the unionists refused, the bosses said, the coverage may be eliminated.

"If we have to pay that much for health insurance we will be working for pennies," Theresa Leshner, 30, told the *Militant* during a visit to the picket line. Leshner has been at the plant for 10 years and said that this is the only job she has ever had.

During the second week of the strike, Leonard Springer, an executive of the parent company Leventhal, Ltd., gave 60 days notice that he might close the plant, directing his warning at the Lykens mayor and the union, UNITE officials stated. Leventhal Ltd., is based in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

No sooner had the notice been issued than semi-tractor trailers, bearing Tennessee plates and accompanied by state troopers, began loading shirts and machinery from the plant. According to the *Pottsville Republican-Herald*, UNITE officials said that Springer had "dismissed the last remaining company supervisor."

Despite the bitter cold, the strikers are maintaining their picket shifts during daytime hours, and say they are determined to see the fight through. On January 20, Martin Luther King Day, the workers built solidarity with the struggle at a rally in front of the plant.

"Martin Luther King stood for civil rights for all, and we are fighting for civil rights," said Edith Barry, who has worked at the plant for 20 years. "We wanted to make a stand." Ninety percent of the workers came to the rally, she said.

This is the first strike at Libro Shirt, which opened in 1921 and was the only factory in the area to remain open during the 1930s Great Depression, reported striker Sue Snyder.

She has taken on the task of sawing wood at home for the fire barrels that help

the strikers keep warm while out in the cold. Lykens lies in a valley in the southern section of the anthracite coal region where temperatures have been falling to zero.

Snyder was one of more than 20 strikers who attended a union organizing rally January 15 in Washington, D.C., by workers at Linens of the Week. On January 17, these 250 laundry workers in Washington and Baltimore voted 2-1 to join UNITE.

Both UNITE international president Bruce Raynor and UNITE Mid-Atlantic regional director Harold Bock have visited the Libro picket line. The union announced January 17 that Local 317-C had won a favorable ruling on a November arbitration hearing on unfair labor practices the union charged against the company.

While welcoming the ruling, Local 317-C president Faye Shutt said, "We may have won the case, but we're still not back to work." Shutt added, "We plan to stand together until this is over."

Janet Post works as a sewer at Hollander Home Fashions in Frackville, Pennsylvania, where she is a member of UNITE Local 133.

Contribute to the Books for Cuba Fund

The *Militant* is appealing for contributions to the Books for Cuba Fund. This fund makes it possible to respond to requests by Cuban libraries, schools, and other institutions for titles published by Pathfinder. It also means they can be sold at affordable prices to Cubans at events like the Havana International Book Fair.

As in previous years, Pathfinder will have a booth at this year's fair, which will run from January 30 to February 9 in Havana and from there will go to other cities. During past fairs, librarians, students, workers, soldiers, and others have made requests for Pathfinder titles. In response, the publisher has made a number of donations to libraries and other cultural institutions.

On the final day Pathfinder will make every title in its booth available in Cuban pesos. Many people who have visited the booth eagerly await the opportunity to read books on the international class struggle, U.S. politics, the fight for women's liberation, and other questions.

This year Pathfinder will organize special presentations on several new



Militant/Daniel Ahl
Pathfinder booth at 2002 Havana book fair drew stream of visitors.

titles at the fair. They are: *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*; *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon in Cuba's Revolutionary War, 1956-58*; and *October 1962: The "Missile" Crisis as Seen from Cuba* by Tomás Diez Acosta.

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Washington rally marks Roe v. Wade

Continued from front page earlier that day.

Speaking by telephone to the large anti-abortion action, President George Bush said he would sign legislation banning late-term abortions. These medically necessary procedures are given the emotive and inaccurate name of “partial birth abortions” by opponents of a woman’s right to choose.

The counterdemonstrators were answered by participants in the NOW rally with chants of “We won’t go back!”

Speaking in defense of women’s rights, Angie Roberts from the University of Nebraska in Omaha said that in Nebraska, 97 percent of the counties provide no facilities for abortions. “Fight for your rights!” she urged the crowd. Among the other speakers were NOW President Kim Gandy, and Eleanor Smeal, head of the Feminist Majority.

Nineteen-year-old Julia Matson was at the abortion rights rally with 12 others from Xavier College, a Jesuit college in Cincinnati, Ohio. “I strongly believe women should have the right to control our own bodies,” she told the *Militant*. She said they were bucking the college administration on this issue, adding that “there must be separation of church and state.”

Parris Hatcher, 23, was there from Greensboro, North Carolina. “This is an important issue, especially for women of color,” she said, “and it is broader than just abortion, it’s a question of women’s rights and our liberation.”

For some women this was their first demonstration. Their refusal to be pushed back was evident in their spirited chanting and the many signs reading, “Never Go Back.”

Several of the official speakers sounded an alarmist note, saying that further legal restrictions on abortion rights had become more likely since the November elections, in which the Republican Party gained the majority in the House of Representatives to add to its majority position in the Senate.

Reduced access to abortion

Since the 1973 Supreme Court decision, restrictions on abortion have been imposed by both Congress and various state legislatures. Thirty-two states now require women under 18 to obtain parental consent. Eighteen states require a waiting period, generally 24 hours, between mandatory counseling and the abortion procedure.

Today, some 87 percent of all counties in the U.S. have no abortion providers, while the number of U.S. abortion providers has fallen to its lowest level in three decades.

At the same time, support for the availability of abortion remains widespread. In a *New York Times*/CBS poll released on the anniversary, only 22 percent of respondents said that abortion should be banned while 39 percent responded that abortion should be “generally available.”

Given these attitudes, which register the

broader social gains won by women as well as the conquest of the movement against previous abortion restrictions, prominent presidential adviser Karl Rove expressed some caution when interviewed by the *Times* on the administration’s plans.

“For now, we’re focusing on getting the partial-birth abortion ban and doing something about cloning,” he said, referring to the administration’s ban on medical stem cell research, which involves cloning technology. “Let’s get those victories before we start making prognostications about what might be years in the future,” he said.

During the Roe v. Wade anniversary week volunteers from the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force mobilized in the morning hours to ensure the clinics remained open and to prevent any possible attempts at blockades.

Right to abortion won by struggles of women

Printed below are excerpts from “The Abortion Struggle: What Have We Accomplished; Where Should We Go from Here?” The article appears in the third of a three-part series of Education For Socialists bulletins entitled, *Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women’s Liberation: Documents of the Socialist Workers Party, 1971-86*. The article was originally published in July 1973 as part of a discussion within the Socialist Workers Party on advancing the fight for women’s liberation. Copyright © 1992 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

The January 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion was a landmark victory in the struggle for women’s liberation.

It was the first major advance recorded by the new wave of struggles by women in the fight against the institutionalized domestic slavery to which women have been relegated by class society.

The abortion rights victory opened the door for millions of women—especially working women, Blacks, Chicanas, Puerto Ricans—to begin to control their own reproductive functions, their own bodies. It went a significant way towards establishing a fundamental human right for all women—the right to choose whether or not to bear a child.

Freedom from enforced motherhood is a precondition to women’s liberation. Only with the right to control their own bodies can women begin to reassert their full human identity as productive, not only reproductive, beings.

The 1973 abortion rights decision sets the stage for a new level of women’s liberation struggles. Such struggles will be inspired by the victory won and enhanced by the



Militant/Darryl Sheppard

Hundreds of women rally January 22 outside U.S. Supreme Court in Washington to defend ruling that legalized abortion in 1973.

heightened social expectations and confidence of women developed because of the decision and the changes it will bring.

The victory can only serve to hasten the development of a proletarian vanguard of fighting women and men capable of achieving women’s liberation and leading the American socialist revolution to victory....

Behind the Supreme Court victory

The Supreme Court decision was brought about by a combination of factors. Some of them are cited in the 1971 SWP resolution, “Towards a Mass Feminist Movement,” as factors responsible for the emergence of the women’s liberation struggle as a whole.

First, the decision was a product of the increasing disparity between the actual position of women and the possibilities provided by today’s technology and wealth for freeing women from a narrow existence of domestic drudgery. As a result of psychological conditioning and economic coercion women continue to be channeled into the role of wife-mother-housekeeper. They are systematically molded for this socially prescribed role by law, by custom, by religion, by the dominant ideology of the ruling class. They are taught it is their “natural” place. While women today have more options than ever before in terms of jobs, education, and participation in productive activity, they are still restricted at every turn by the institutionalized forms of sexual discrimination and oppression which are the basic underpinnings of class society.

This disparity between what is and what could be became abundantly clear in the debate around the issue of abortion. The use of birth control devices and the pill are now widespread in the U.S., and are recognized as a legal right in most states. Under modern medical practice abortions are safer by far than childbirth. But for simply exercising the right to control their own bodies, women have been branded as criminals and condemned to risk their lives at the hands of back street abortionists.

This and similar contradictions gave rise to the women’s liberation movement in general and the struggle against the reactionary abortion laws in particular.

The impact of women’s liberation ideas and the fight carried out by large numbers of women was another major factor behind the Supreme Court decision. This was manifested in the fact that the concept put forward by large numbers of women’s liberation forces—that abortion should be a woman’s right to choose—was incorporated in the Supreme Court decision.

The ruling was also influenced by the general radicalization with its challenges to traditional attitudes and values. The rise of the Black movement, the antiwar movement and other struggles for social change helped create an atmosphere that spurred changing views on abortion.

The influence of the radicalization, and the development of the feminist movement in particular, was reflected in the polls that showed a rapid change in attitudes relating to abortion between 1968 and 1971. In 1968, the polls reported that only 15 percent of the population believed women had a right to abortion. Abortion was still

largely a secret ordeal that many women went through but were afraid to talk about. By 1969, the percentage supporting abortion rose dramatically to 40 percent. By 1971, it was 50 percent.

The rise of the women’s liberation movement helped bring about the first partial victory in the abortion rights struggle: the legalization of abortion in New York state in 1970. The excellent safety record in New York under the new law and the demonstrated demand for legal abortion helped legitimize the procedure and also made it more difficult for the ruling class to take back this limited gain women had won....

Upsurge of abortion rights struggle

The turning point came with a number of startling successes registered by the anti-abortion forces including a right-to-life demonstration of 10,000 in New York, the defeat of pro-abortion referendums in Michigan and North Dakota and the near defeat of the New York law in the state legislature. These setbacks in the spring and summer of 1972, and the clear danger that the New York law would be lost during the upcoming session of the New York legislature, helped convince large numbers of women of the urgent need to unite and take action to defend the gains already won and to extend them further.

As a result, WONAAC [Women’s National Abortion Action Coalition] meetings and activities began to win new and broader support. The local tribunals, held in the fall of 1972, were successful in involving sectors of the women’s movement and the traditional abortion rights organizations which had refused to work with WONAAC in the past.

WONAAC began to regroup broader forces that had the potential for organizing sizable actions. Three hundred people, including prominent supporters of abortion in the New York Assembly and representatives from various abortion groups, participated in a WONAAC-sponsored meeting in early December which mapped out plans to defend the New York law. Groups such as Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Women’s Political Caucus and the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws began to join with WONAAC to build specific actions. An extremely broad list of endorsements was obtained for the planned Abortion Tribunal.

WONAAC also began to work with some significant union forces, including individual union leaders of the hospital workers (Local 1199), the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the Furrier, Leather and Machine Workers Union, the Cleaners and Dyers Joint Board, the Social Service Employees Union and others....

The dramatic upsurge of the abortion rights struggle internationally—involving demonstrations of up to 10,000 in both France and Belgium—indicates that the abortion issue does indeed have the potential, as we consistently and correctly emphasized, to provoke significant struggle for this basic need of women. It was precisely this potential that the ruling class was attempting to defuse through the concession it made with the high court ruling.

For further reading from Pathfinder

Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women’s Liberation

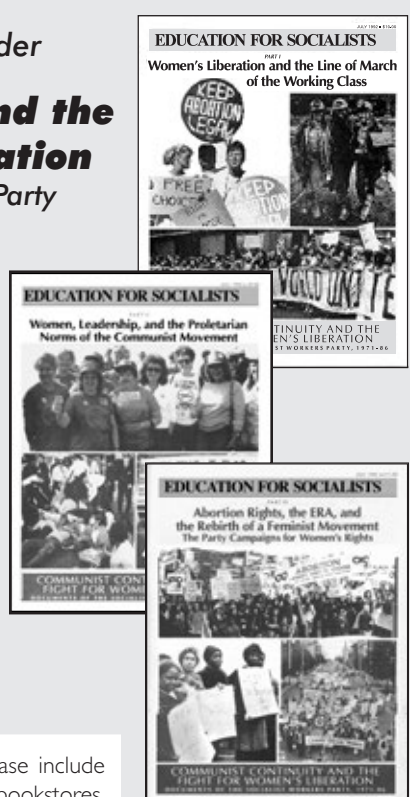
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Edited with an introduction by Mary-Alice Waters

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Florida students back defense campaign

BY KARL BUTTS
AND RACHELE FRUIT

TAMPA, Florida—"We are proud that you are here with us and glad to support your fight," said Leena Al-Arian, welcoming Róger Calero to a meeting at the University of South Florida (USF) here to defend his right to live and work in the United States.

Al-Arian, a freshman and a member of the Muslim Student Association, told participants at the meeting what life in the United States has been for her "growing up a Muslim experiencing racism and hatred." About 25 people participated in the January 21 campus gathering, which was sponsored by the Alliance of Concerned Students and the Campus Greens.

Calero, associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and a *Militant* staff writer, came here as part of a national speaking tour organized by his defense committee in New York. Tour events in the Midwest and the West Coast have successfully built support for his fight against the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) attempt to deport him.

Leena Al-Arian brought flyers to the meeting urging participants to join the March for Justice for her father, USF professor Sami Al-Arian, who has been banned from campus for more than 14 months. He will be returning for a grievance hearing against the university's campaign to fire him. Branded by the administration as a supporter of "terrorism," Sami Al-Arian, a Palestinian, has been targeted for his longstanding and outspoken sup-



Militant/Above: Sonja Swanson; Right: Karl Butts
Above, Calero talks to members of a Tampa mosque who are fighting racist discrimination and the University of South Florida's attempts to fire Sami Al-Arian, a Palestinian professor branded by the administration as a "terrorist" for supporting the struggle of his people for self-determination. Right, Calero meets with Al-Arian (at right) who endorsed Calero's fight.



port for the rights of his people.

Earlier in the day, Calero met with the Palestinian fighter, who endorsed his fight to remain in the country. Sami Al-Arian explained that Calero's fight, and those of countless others, "are all one fight."

Nancy Tyson, member of the faculty

union, greeted Calero, saying, "I welcome you, Róger, on behalf of the United Faculty of Florida."

The faculty union is engaged in a struggle with the administration over its attempts to fire Sami Al-Arian as well as its efforts to use recent changes in gover-

Florida farm workers attend Calero meeting

Continued from front page
the conviction in 1990 when they granted Calero permanent residency and in 2000 when they renewed his green card.

A national campaign has been organized by the Róger Calero Defense Committee, which includes the speaking tour of cities across the country.

Fernando Cuevas, Sr.; Fernando Cuevas, Jr., and Rudy Valentin, all organizers for the North/Central Florida Carpenters Regional Council, participated in the meeting here. Cuevas, Sr., and Valentin both came forward to express solidarity with Calero and spoke of their efforts to defend immigrant rights. Cuevas, Sr., also encouraged participants to pitch in their financial contributions for Calero's defense starting off the basket with his. Workers at the meeting contributed \$101.

Calero, speaking in both Spanish and English, described how his case was similar to thousands of others. "Millions of local, state, and federal court records are being dumped into INS computers, and they are using virtually any offense, no matter how old, as a basis to detain and deport immigrant workers," he said.

Calero's talk highlighted the fact that the deportation and stepped up harassment of immigrants following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon was an acceleration of the course already set by the capitalist ruling class to chip away at the rights of working people.

During the discussion, one worker asked if it made any difference whether protest letters were written in Spanish or English. Calero encouraged everyone to "use whatever is best for your expression." He said that he had met some women strikers at a tortilla factory in Chicago who had decided to write a letter together.

Calero emphasized the importance of this public pressure. "The fact that I'm here is a victory in itself and reflects the dozens and dozens of letters that poured into the INS office while I was in jail. The INS hates to have to answer questions about what they are doing in public."

One University of South Florida (USF)

student attending the meeting jotted down a collective protest statement and presented it to the group for their approval. It read:

"On January 20, 2003, citizens and immigrants alike heard the story of Róger Calero in Plant City, Florida. We are all touched by his experience, and together we support his struggle to remain in the United States. We ask that you hear our collective voice and that you understand that we are aware of how your decision in his case affects us all. He is as much a citizen as someone born in the U.S. You must respect his right to continue his work and life as an American resident."

The audience applauded in agreement.

Campus paper reports on antideportation fight

The article below was printed in the January 22 edition of *The Oracle*, the student newspaper at University of South Florida. It appeared under the headline "Be wary of INS laws, former detainee says."

BY GRACE AGOSTIN

Róger Calero had passed through the Houston airport many times before. Each time he came from Cuba, and each time he was granted permission by the law.

Calero, a reporter for *Perspectiva Mundial*, said he was typically coming

from an event he was covering for the New York-based magazine. But on Dec. 3, he was detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service at the airport and was faced with deportation charges.

The basis for Calero's deportation, he said, was from a conviction in 1988 for selling marijuana to an undercover police officer, although it was a 14-year-old case and he has been a U.S. resident for 17 years.

Calero told a group of faculty and students Tuesday night in the Phyllis P. Marshall Center that he was denied his constitutional rights and that since the Sept. 11 attacks immigrants are facing a greater risk of deportation.

"Their aim is to silence a group of workers who they think will not fight back," Calero said.

But, Calero said he plans to fight his charges until his March 25 hearing by educating others about INS laws.

"By taking up this fight ... it is an example of how this can have a social impact for everyone," Calero said. "We want to speak not only about my case but join with others that want to do the same, want to fight back."

Since Calero's deportation charges, he has traveled across the state to share his story with others. Monday he spoke in Plant City to a group of immigrant to tell them about the struggle that must be fought.

Calero said when he was arrested at the airport, the police read him his Miranda rights but he was denied an attorney because he was being held on detention.

It is the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, Calero said, that has strengthened the

nance of the Florida university system to undercut union rights. She noted that "at USF all of the faculty are now being forced to operate under 'temporary, emergency rules,' although no one can tell us what the emergency is."

Pointing to her blouse she continued, "I am wearing this button, 'I do not speak for USF' for two reasons—one, in solidarity with Dr. Al-Arian, and also because one of the new rules is that all faculty must state that we do not represent USF when we speak."

Attacks target all workers

Participants in the meeting agreed with Calero when he pointed out that airport screeners were told that union rights are not compatible with the "war on terrorism," and that what the government wants is a docile workforce. He said that the increasing attacks on immigrants make it easier for the bosses and their government to go after the rights of all workers. "I found in Los Angeles that there are still memories of the internment of Japanese during World War II, and the surprising thing is that two-thirds of those incarcerated were U.S. citizens."

Calero spoke about the resistance occurring across the country—from the demonstration of thousands in Los Angeles protesting the arrests of hundreds of Iranians who went to the INS office to comply with forced registration, to the Somali workers who have recently won a stay of deportation, to workers at Dakota Premium Foods in St. Paul, Minnesota, fighting for dignity on the job, to Palestinian activists on a hunger strike in the Passaic County, New Jersey, jail.

Leena Al-Arian added that her uncle, Mazen Al-Najjar, had been imprisoned by the INS for three and a half years on secret evidence under legislation approved by the Clinton administration.

After September 11 Al-Najjar was rearrested for overstaying his visa, held in solitary confinement for more than six months, and finally deported to Lebanon, she said, and that he had lived in the United States since 1981 and has three children born and raised here. As a result, he and his family have been uprooted to a country with an unfamiliar culture, and a language they don't speak.

Responding to a question as to whether Calero thought he was being targeted for

Continued on Page 11

Róger Calero defense campaign tour

The Róger Calero Defense Committee has launched a speaking tour for Calero in cities around the country to broaden the fight to stop his deportation by the INS. Below is the schedule for the next stops in the tour. Requests for additional tour dates can be made to the committee.

N.Y./New Jersey Jan. 28–Feb. 2

Seattle Feb. 20–22

Colorado Feb. 23–25

For more information or to send a contribution, contact the Róger Calero Defense Committee; Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007; tel/fax: (212) 563-0585; e-mail: calerodefense@yahoo.com



Fighters against cop brutality in Houston support defense case

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON—"We have to say 'Enough!' to all these INS abuses," said Martha Olvera, speaking at a meeting of 50 people at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church parish hall here January 24.

Olvera is a leader of the Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty in Houston. Róger Calero is one of "thousands of people who have been detained by the INS," she said, adding that "Róger is speaking out against these INS crimes. We have to support him."

Olvera is one of the four national chairpersons of the Róger Calero Defense Committee. She has led a broad public campaign for justice for her brother-in-law, Serafin Olvera, who was killed by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) cops. He died as a result of a brutal beating by the agents during a March 25, 2001, raid. Three INS agents were indicted last September, on charges of violating Sarafin's civil rights.

Cristobal Hinojosa, of Mexicanos en Acción, introduced the socialist journalist. This is an important battle, he said, "for the future of immigrant rights in this country."

"Calero is the associate editor of the Spanish language news magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* and a staff reporter for the *Militant*," said Hinojosa. "This man, who has been a permanent resident of the United States for 12 years, was seized by the INS at the Houston airport December 3 as he returned from reporting on confer-

ences in Havana, Cuba, and Guadalajara, Mexico."

Calero was put into an INS jail in Houston. Authorities based his arrest on a 1988 conviction on a charge of selling an ounce of marijuana to an undercover cop. He was released after dozens of people sent letters to the INS protesting the detention. On March 25 Calero will appear at an INS "removal" hearing in Houston.

"We will not be silent now that they are trying to quietly remove him," said Hinojosa. "We will be there for the March 25 hearing and before."

"We will make a campaign that lets them know that they cannot exclude people," he said to applause.

Thousands face same harassment

"My case is only one of thousands," said Calero. In every city where he has spoken, he reported, people have related their experiences with co-workers, relatives and friends who face the same kind of harassment.

"What I face," he said, "is part of the violations of rights and attacks on our dignity that workers in Houston and cities throughout the United States face daily." These violations come "at the hands of INS cops, local cops, and the whole prison system, including the threat of the death penalty whether carried out in the streets or in jail," he said.

Marga Hernandez also spoke. She is a member of the United Concerned Citizens



Militant/Barbara Graham

Martha Olvera, leader of Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty, speaks at January 24 meeting in Houston in support of Róger Calero's fight against deportation. Olvera, a national cochair of Calero's defense committee, has led fight to win justice for a her brother-in-law, Serafin Olvera, who died from beating by immigration cops in 2001.

of Baytown, a group organized in response to the cop killing of Luis Alfonso Torres on January 20 last year. "Have you thought of organizing a march in Houston before the March 25 INS hearing?" she asked.

Many people at the meeting had participated in a protest through the streets of Houston four days earlier on the anniversary of the killing of Torres, a Mexican immigrant who had been living and working in nearby Baytown, Texas. Although his death at the hands of city cops was ruled a homicide by the Harris County medical examiner, and a police video of the unprovoked beating that killed him showed no resistance on his part, the cops involved faced no punishment.

Also speaking at the gathering was Benito Juárez, from the Immigrant and Refugee Affairs division of the mayor's office. Juárez said, "The struggle for Calero

isn't only about him. Thousands suffer because of the cruelty of these policies."

Ricardo Benitez of the Carpenters union in Houston sent a message of support. Participants in the meeting contributed more than \$500 toward the national fundraising goal of \$50,000, bringing to \$1,500 the amount raised to date in Houston.

Church members hear case

The following Sunday Calero participated in a meeting at the Shrine of the Black Madonna, on the invitation of Houston councilwoman Ada Edwards. She met Calero before the public meeting and added her name to the list of the committee's endorers.

At the Sunday event participants related experiences of friends and family members that helped them identify with Calero's fight. One woman spoke about a friend from Houston whose husband was picked up at work last March, held by the INS, and then sent to Pakistan. She and her daughter are still here.

"We have launched a nonpartisan campaign," Calero said. Six participants filled out endorser cards and others asked to be informed of defense campaign activities. Councilwoman Edwards invited defense committee members to speak on her radio program the following week and to make a presentation at a broader meeting of the church membership.

Calero did several radio interviews and one TV feature interview. The Spanish-language *El Día* published two articles on his fight during his visit to Houston. He spent time with workers and others interested in his case as well as participating in a demonstration against U.S. imperialism's war against Iraq.

Calero was also invited to speak at a class at the University of Houston as part of a series on class and race, where 40 students listened to his presentation and asked questions until the next class filed in. At the class 21 students signed petitions demanding the INS drop its deportation proceedings against Calero.

Calero joins picket line during tour in Miami

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER
AND ERIC SIMPSON

MIAMI—At his first stop on the Miami leg of his tour to build support for his defense campaign, Róger Calero joined garment workers on their picket line outside Point Blank Body Armor north of Miami. The workers struck the plant on August 9 in response to company firings of pro-union workers and to win recognition for the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE).

Some 75 workers heard Calero tell about his fight against the attempts of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to deport him.

The next night Calero spoke as part of a panel at the main public meeting of his visit, held at the University of Miami (UM). More than 100 people were welcomed to the event by UM history professor Edmund Abaka.

A number of the striking garment workers participated, along with two UNITE organizers and the president of the UNITE local. One Point Blank striker, Umberto de la Cruz, explained how the INS had been used against the workers there and why they identified with Calero's fight.

"We have been trying to organize a union where I work for two years now," he said. "And the first thing that the company did two years ago was to call up the Immigration and Naturalization Service. And in that raid they took 80 people."

When the workers stepped up their fight for a union, he said, the company tried to intimidate them. "But we decided to leave our work area and embark on a work stoppage. We are still on strike and we are only a step away from resolving our problems."

'Stay in the struggle'

"But even if we resolve our particular problems, we want to continue the campaign for the others who still need help. 'We cannot permit the INS to mistreat us and intimidate us,' said the garment worker. "That's why all together we need to stay in the struggle."

Altaf Ali, executive director of the Florida chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, described the jailing of people around the country, especially those of Middle Eastern origin.

Also speaking was Marleine Bastien, executive director of Fanm Ayisyen Nan

Miyami (Haitian Women of Miami). She pointed to the authorities' abusive treatment of Haitian immigrants who have been jailed as they arrive by boat. The struggle to force the release of these working people from Krome Detention Center has "gotten broad support," she said. "The community has banded together through demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns."

"We have workers here from Point Blank," she added. "Workers built this country. Róger Calero is among the thousands of immigrants who are removed from their productive role in society. What kind of government puts people like that in jail?" "We join today in demanding the immediate release of the Haitian refugees," said Calero.

"What's happening to me is happening to thousands of others," he said. "The 1996 Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act allows INS police to deport immigrants based on prior convictions for petty offenses."

"Former co-workers of mine at Dakota Premium in Minnesota, where we fought to organize a union, were the first to take up my fight. This exemplifies how the fight for immigrant rights is a life and death question for the labor movement today," he said.

Student organizations that cosponsored the meeting included Planet Kreyol (the Haitian student organization), the African Student Union, the UM Arab Club, Islamic Students of UM, and the United Black Students.

Greetings were given to the meeting by representatives of UNITE for Dignity, Alianza Martiana, the Nation of Islam, the Miami Committee against the U.S. Embargo of Cuba, and Jobs with Justice. Participants contributed \$700 to help defray legal and other expenses in the Calero fight. The program was covered by Spanish-language TV station UNIVISION.



Militant/Mary Ann Schmidt

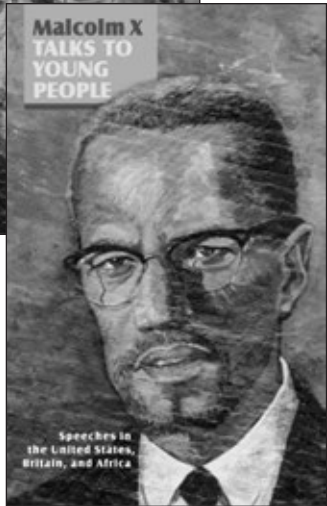
Róger Calero speaks to UNITE members on picket line outside Point Blank Body Armor in Oakland Park, Florida. Workers have been on strike since August.

Support the Róger Calero Defense Committee

- Send messages to INS district director Hipolito Acosta demanding the exclusion moves against Calero be dropped. Messages can be faxed to (281) 774-5989 or mailed to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 126 Northpoint Drive, Houston, TX 77060. Copies should be sent to the Róger Calero Defense Committee, c/o PRDF, Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007; fax (212) 563-0585.
- Sign and distribute petitions demanding the INS drop the exclusion of Calero. A brochure and petition are available from the defense committee (e-mail: calerodefense@yahoo.com).
- Funds are urgently needed to meet rapidly mounting legal and other expenses. Defense campaign backers in every city need to raise thousands of dollars for these needs. Organize phone calling for donations, seek honoraria for speaking engagements, and take collections at public meetings. The goal is to raise over \$50,000 by the end of January. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Celebrate Black History Month

WITH PATHFINDER



Malcolm X Talks to Young People/ Malcolm X habla a la Juventud

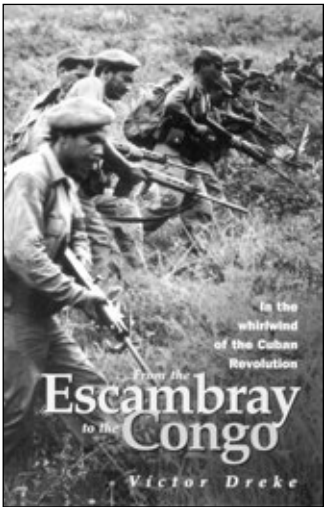
by Malcolm X

New, expanded edition includes, for the first time in print, the entire December 1964 debate presentation by Malcolm X at the Oxford Union and February 1965 speech at the London School of Economics. The 2002 edition contains other new material complementing four talks by Malcolm X given to young people in Ghana, the United Kingdom, and the United States in the last months of Malcolm's life. The collection concludes with two memorial tributes by a young socialist leader to this great revolutionary, whose example and words continue to speak the truth to generation after generation of youth. Expanded 17-page photo display. Also available in Spanish. Price: \$15.00

From the Escambray to the Congo *In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*

by Victor Dreke

In this participant's account, Victor Dreke describes how easy it became to 'take down the rope' segregating Blacks from whites at town dances, yet how enormous was the battle to transform the social relations underlying all the 'ropes' inherited from capitalism and Yankee domination. Dreke recounts the determination, internationalism, and creative joy with which working people have defended their revolutionary course against U.S. imperialism—from Cuba's own Escambray mountains to the Americas, Africa and beyond. Also available in Spanish. \$17.00

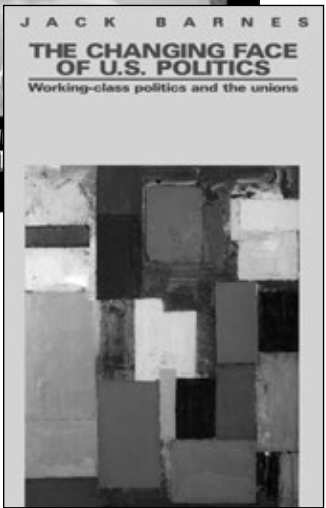
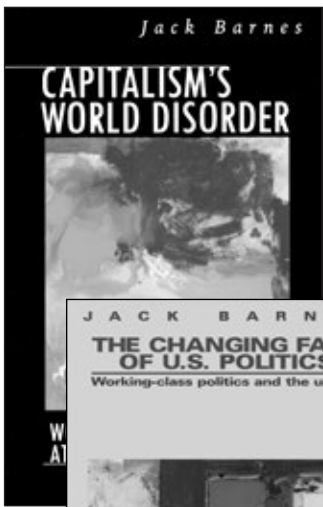


Capitalism's World Disorder

Working-Class Politics at the Millenium

by Jack Barnes

Today's spreading economic and social crisis and acts of imperialist aggression are not the product of something gone wrong, Barnes explains, but the lawful workings of capitalism. Yet the future can be changed by the united struggle and selfless action of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. Also Available in French and Spanish. Price: \$23.95

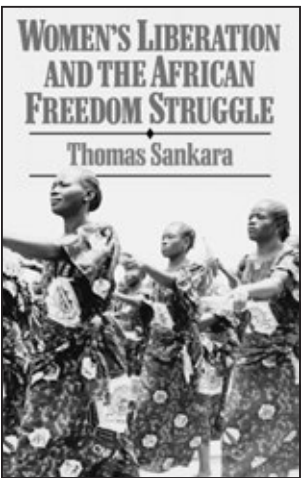


The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

by Jack Barnes

This is a handbook for young people who, in growing numbers, are repelled by the racism, women's inequality, and other intolerable social relations reproduced every day by the normal operation of capitalism on a world scale. It explains that the oppression of Blacks and other national minorities, and the racism used to justify it are deeply rooted in the historical development of American capitalism. In today's world of deepening capitalist social crisis, struggles against racist discrimination, police brutality, and attacks on hard-won civil and political rights increasingly intertwine with the resistance by workers and farmers to economic devastation and imperialist war. Also available in French and Spanish. \$23.00



Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle

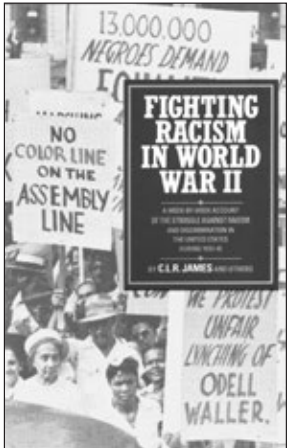
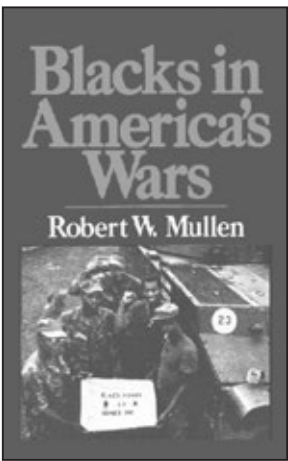
by Thomas Sankara

"There is no true social revolution without the liberation of women," explains the leader of the 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso. Workers and peasants in that West African country established a popular revolutionary government and began to combat the hunger, illiteracy, and economic backwardness imposed by imperialist domination. Also available in Spanish, French, Farsi \$5.00

Blacks in America's Wars *The Shift in Attitudes from the Revolutionary War to Vietnam*

By Richard Mullen

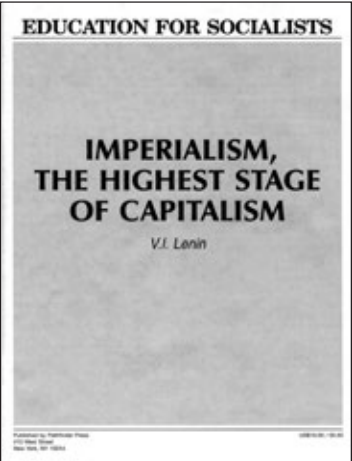
"Reveals many little-known facts about the role and treatment of the Black GI's"—*Publishers Weekly*
ISBN: 087348-897-0
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Fighting Racism in World War II

by C.L.R. James, George Breitman, Edgar Keemer, and others

A week-by-week account of the struggle against racism and racial discrimination in the United States from 1939 to 1945, taken from the pages of the socialist newsweekly, the *Militant*. \$21.95



Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism

by V.I. Lenin

"I trust that this pamphlet will help the reader to understand the fundamental economic question, that of the economic essence of imperialism," Lenin wrote in 1917. "For unless this is studied, it will be impossible to understand and appraise modern war and modern politics." Also available in Spanish. \$10.00

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Pathfinder Readers Club membership is available online

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Workers and youth interested in revolutionary ideas can now expand their library of Pathfinder books at discounted prices by becoming a member of the Pathfinder Readers Club online.

For just a \$10 annual fee, the Readers Club, which has been in existence for more than a decade, offers members a 15 percent discount on all Pathfinder books and pamphlets, and even larger discounts on featured books each month.

With the launching of Pathfinder’s web site at the beginning of last year, individuals and bookstores have been able to place their orders for books online. However, during the first year of the existence of pathfinderpress.com, Readers Club members weren’t able to automatically receive discounts for books ordered at the web site.

Starting this month individuals can now sign up as members of the Readers Club online and order their books at discounted prices. Club members ordering books through Pathfinder’s web site receive the same discounts as they would if they purchased the books at a Pathfinder bookstore (these discounts remain valid for purchases from any Pathfinder bookstore around the world.)

Among the books that Readers Club members can now purchase in this way are *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women’s Platoon in Cuba’s Revolutionary War, 1956–58*, together with the Spanish edition, *Marianas en combate*. Both of these titles were published in January. Also now available is the first-ever Pathfinder edition in both English and Spanish of *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* by Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin. It is in an easy-to-read 8 1/2 x 11 inch format, along with the new 2003 Pathfinder catalog.

New International no. 12, which will be distributed by Pathfinder, will also be published soon. The magazine will feature a lead article “Capitalism’s Long, Hot Winter Has Begun,” by Socialist Workers Party

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ALABAMA

Birmingham

The Murder of Emmett Till—Video and Discussion. Fri., Feb. 7, 7:30 p.m. *3029-A Bessemer Rd.* Donation: \$4. Students and unemployed \$2.. Tel: (205) 780-0021.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Defend Affirmative Action! Why Affirmative Action, Backed up with Quotas, Should Be Supported by the Working Class. Speaker: Nan Bailey, Socialist Workers Party, Fri., Feb. 7, 7:30 p.m., *4229 S. Central Ave., (between Vernon and MLK).* Donation: \$5. Tel:(323)233-9372.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Oppose U.S. Threats Against North Korea. Speaker: Mike Taber, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 31, Program, 7:30 p.m.; dinner, 6:30 p.m. *168 Bloomfield Ave.* Donation: Program \$5. Dinner \$5. Tel: (973) 481-0077.

NEW YORK

Garment District

Imperialism’s March Toward War in Iraq Speaker: Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party, Fri., Jan. 31, 7:30 p.m. *545 Eighth Ave.* Donation \$5. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

PENNSYLVANIA

Hazleton

A Documentary Film for Black History Month: “The Murder of Emmett Till.” Fri., Feb. 7, 7:30 p.m. *69 N. Wyoming St.* Donation \$4. Tel: (570) 454-8320.

national secretary Jack Barnes. Also in this magazine of Marxist politics and theory will be two reports presented to the Third Congress of the Communist International in 1921—“The World Economic Crisis and Tasks of Communists,” by Leon Trotsky and “A Very Unstable Equilibrium,” by V.I. Lenin.

Also scheduled for publication is the French edition of *Their Trotsky and Ours*.

In the coming months Pathfinder will be publishing *The Assault on Moncada: Forging the Revolutionary Movement in Cuba, 1952–53*, by Mario Mencia, and *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58*, a participant’s account by Armando Hart. A founding member of the July 26 Movement, Hart was a leader of its urban underground in the 1950s.

After the triumph of the revolution he served as minister of education from 1959 to 1965 and minister of culture, 1976–97. Hart has been a member of the Communist Party Central Committee since 1965. Both books will be appearing in English for the first time.

For the month of February Pathfinder is featuring seven recently reprinted books and pamphlets at a 25 percent discount for Readers Club members. The books on sale, which can be purchased at Pathfinder bookstores or online, are: *Two Speeches* by Malcolm X, *The Socialist Workers Party in World War II* by James P. Cannon, *The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky,

BY CAROL BALL

GLASGOW, Scotland—Less than 24 hours before it was set to start, local councillors banned a January 25 march in Wishaw called to mark the 31st anniversary of Bloody Sunday—the day in 1972 when British troops shot and killed 14 unarmed civil rights demonstrators in Derry, Ireland.

Paul Steele, a member of the Volunteer Tom Williams Republican Flute Band, part of the West of Scotland Bands Alliance that organized the march, described the ban as “an infringement of our civil liberties.”

Based on what the cops called “new information which indicates there is a significant threat of serious disorder, violence and damage to property,” the councillors hastily convened a meeting and banned the march.

Offering no evidence, the *Daily Record* accused march organizers of having in the past provoked violence and a number of arrests. The paper also claimed that the bands have websites that “glorify IRA terrorism and sectarian hatred.” The band in question has no web site.

Jack McConnell, member of the Scottish Parliament for the area, said through a spokesman that “when processions are used to promote sectarianism or fuel religious hatred then he’d expect the police to take this into account and take action.”

— CALENDAR —

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Fund-raising Party for Farouk Abdel-Muhti, Palestinian Activist Jailed by INS. Sat., Feb. 8, 6 p.m. *Winston Unity Hall, 235 West 23rd St. (between 7th & 8th Avenues).* Donation: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. For more information, call (212) 674-9499; Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti.

Stop the Deportation of Róger Calero! Speakers: Róger Calero; Rev. Dr. Earl Kooperkamp; Kathy Andrade; Luis Miranda. Sat., Feb. 1, 7 p.m. Social to follow. *St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 521 W. 126th St. (between Broadway and Amsterdam).* Donation: \$5. Tel: 212-563-0585; Róger Calero Defense Committee.



Home page of www.pathfinderpress.com includes link to Readers Club

Revolución granadina by Maurice Bishop and Fidel Castro, *The 1985–86 Hormel Meat Packers Strike* by Fred Halstead, *Europe and America* by Leon Trotsky, and *Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1930–31*.

The new Pathfinder 2003 catalog is an invaluable tool for introducing readers and book buyers to the many varied political titles available from Pathfinder. The 10-page “New & Noteworthy” section in the beginning of the catalog highlights some of the publisher’s newest titles, including *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*, *Marianas in Combat*, and *October 1962: The ‘Missile’ Crisis as Seen from Cuba*. Each book has a brief summary of its contents. Many also have cover reproductions highlighting some of the hundreds of titles published by Pathfinder.

Also featured is a “Pathfinder around the world” photo display showing sales of the publisher’s titles at book fairs, librarians’ conferences, on campus, and at street tables

and political events. The catalog, which sells for \$1, is now available from www.pathfinderpress.com.

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Scottish town bans march to commemorate Bloody Sunday massacre in Northern Ireland

McConnell has been at the forefront of a chauvinist campaign against Irish nationalism in the name of combating religious “sectarianism.” Scotland has a substantial population of Irish origin that has been subjected to second-class status.

“It is totally unacceptable that our community is denied rights because of threats,” said Jim Slaven of the James Connolly Society. “We are adamant that we will be challenging this.”

Organizers will reapply for a permit, said Kelly Phinn, another member of the Tom Williams Flute Band. “It will be worse for them in the end, because more people will come when we do have the march,” he said.

“Feelings are running high,” said Slaven, “as people feel that for generations we have

had to put up with [pro-British] marches that are provocative, cause disruption, and are intimidatory of the Catholic population.” The area is the scene of annual marches celebrating the British conquest of Ireland. Flute bands connected to the Orange Order, a rightist pro-British organization that is anti-Catholic, are active in the marches.

“They’ve marched through Wishaw for years,” said Phinn. “The Scottish Executive has anti-racist billboards saying ‘One Scotland, many cultures,’” commented Steele. “There’s a contradiction there.”

“We want an evenhanded approach based on the right to march,” said Slaven. “I am disappointed that politicians saw fit to fuel the fires over this event.”

Róger Calero speaks in Florida

Continued from Page 8

writing for two publications that defend workers, the socialist journalist said, “No, this is happening to many thousands.”

Calero related how he was called by a reporter from his home town for an interview while still in the INS jail in Houston and asked him, “How did you get in there?” “How did you get the scoop?” Calero’s articles from jail exposed that hundreds of other detainees facing similar circumstances. “There is no scoop!” Calero answered. “Everywhere I go, I’m meeting all sorts of people who have been victimized or know someone who has.”

Nahla Arian, Sami Al-Arian’s wife, commented that “relatives in the Arab world are now fearful for those of us who are living in the U.S. They have a new perception that we are living in a horrible place.” She asked, “How is the image of the United States in Latin America?”

Calero responded, “In general, we in the United States are ignorant of the resistance taking place all over Latin America, and they have no idea that we are engaged in these fights here.” He explained that the conferences that he had been covering in Havana and Guadalajara are important forums where these experiences can be exchanged.

At the close of the meeting, Nahla Arian

told Calero, “These attacks are forcing us to organize and come together. I never thought I would be building alliances like this.”

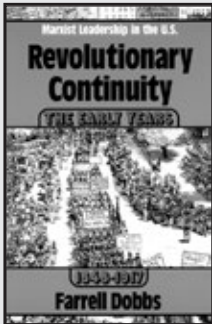
The USF campus newspaper, the *Oracle*, covered the meeting on the front page.

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Behind the rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union

Printed below is an excerpt from *The Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and Where is it Going?* by Leon Trotsky, one of the Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. The author was one of the central leaders of the Russian Revolution.

In 1917 the working class and peasantry of Russia carried out one of the most deep-going revolutions in history. In a matter of months the country underwent an unprecedented leap from a semifeudal monarchy to a republic of the toilers, opening the world socialist revolution.

Yet within 10 years reaction had set in, and workers and peasants were driven from power by a privileged so-

lion's share of their conquests. The victims of the first reactionary wave have been, as a general rule, those pioneers, initiators, and instigators who stood at the head of the masses in the period of the revolutionary offensive. In their stead people of the second line, in league with the former enemies of the revolution, have been advanced to the front. Beneath this dramatic duel of "coryphées" on the open political scene, shifts have taken place in the relations between classes, and, no less important, profound changes in the psychology of the recently revolutionary masses.

Answering the bewildered questions of many comrades as to what has become of the activity of the Bolshevik party and the working class—where is its revolutionary initiative, its spirit of self-sacrifice and plebeian pride—why, in place of all this, has appeared so much vileness, cowardice, pusillanimity and careerism—Rakovsky referred to the life story of the French revolution of the eighteenth century, and offered the example of Babeuf, who on emerging from the Abbaye prison likewise wondered what had become of the heroic people of the Parisian suburbs. A revolution is a mighty devourer of human energy, both individual and collective. The nerves give way. Consciousness is shaken and characters are worn out. Events unfold too swiftly for the flow of fresh forces to replace the loss. Hunger, unemployment, the death of the revolutionary cadres, the removal of the masses from administration, all this led to such a physical and moral impoverishment of the Parisian suburbs that they required three decades before they were ready for a new insurrection.

The axiomatic assertions of the Soviet literature, to the effect that the laws of bourgeois revolutions are "inapplicable" to a proletarian revolution, have no scientific content whatever. The proletarian character of the October revolution was determined by the world situation and by a special correlation of internal forces. But the classes themselves were formed in the barbarous circumstances of czarism and backward capitalism, and were anything but made to order for the demands of a socialist revolution. The exact opposite is true. It is for the very reason that a proletariat still backward in many respects achieved in the space of a few months the unprecedented leap from a semifeudal monarchy to a socialist dictatorship, that the reaction



Under banner, "Comrade Workers and Soldiers, Support Our Demands," women march in Petrograd in months before workers and peasants took power in Oct. 1917 Russian Revolution. Trotsky's *Revolution Betrayed* explains how bureaucratic caste was able to "push masses away from participation in the leadership of the country."

in its ranks was inevitable. This reaction has developed in a series of consecutive waves. External conditions and events have vied with each other in nourishing it. Intervention followed intervention. The revolution got no direct help from the west. Instead of the expected prosperity of the country an ominous destitution reigned for long. Moreover, the outstanding representatives of the working class either died in the civil war, or rose a few steps higher and broke away from the masses. And thus after an unexampled tension of forces, hopes and illusions, there came a long period of weariness, decline and sheer disappointment in the results of the revolution. The ebb of the "plebeian pride" made room for a flood of pusillanimity and careerism. The new commanding caste rose to its place upon this wave.

The demobilization of the Red Army of five million played no small role in the formation of the bureaucracy. The victorious commanders assumed leading posts in the local Soviets, in economy, in education, and

they persistently introduced everywhere that regime which had ensured success in the civil war. Thus on all sides the masses were pushed away gradually from actual participation in the leadership of the country.

The reaction within the proletariat caused an extraordinary flush of hope and confidence in the petty bourgeois strata of town and country, aroused as they were to new life by the NEP, and growing bolder and bolder. The young bureaucracy, which had arisen at first as an agent of the proletariat, began now to feel itself a court of arbitration between the classes. Its independence increased from month to month.

The international situation was pushing with mighty forces in the same direction. The Soviet bureaucracy became more self-confident, the heavier the blows dealt to the world working class. Between these two facts there was not only a chronological, but a causal connection, and one which worked in two directions. The leaders of the bureaucracy promoted the proletarian defeats; the defeats promoted the rise of the bureaucracy.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

cial layer led by Joseph Stalin. *The Revolution Betrayed* explains how and why this bureaucratic caste was able to take and hold political power. Copyright © 1937, 1972 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



It is sufficiently well known that every revolution up to this time has been followed by a reaction, or even a counterrevolution. This, to be sure, has never thrown the nation all the way back to its starting point, but it has always taken from the people the

February BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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March of capitalist civilization—“Foreigners applying for visas to live in Austria will have to prove that they can speak German



Harry Ring

under a tough immigration law that came into force this week.”—January 3 *Times*, London.

Jingle bells—“A weak economy and widespread accounting irregularities conspired to fuel what by one measure has been the biggest year ever for corporate bankrupt-

cies, with the value of 2002 filings soaring to a record \$368 billion as of December 25 Bankruptcy Data.Com.”—News item.

California’s?—“California’s economists frequently are wrong—State’s unexpected revenue swings come in part from failure to forecast stock market.”—*Los Angeles Times* headline.

Cautiously pessimistic—Dan Meckstroth, chief economist of the Manufacturer’s Alliance, said that because of the tough economic conditions, companies remain focused on increasing productivity without increasing jobs. He speculated: “By late 2003 and 2004, we hope you’ll start to see some small increases in manufacturing jobs.”

...meanwhile—“British workers were yesterday given a warning that their pensions face the greatest threat in more than 30 years.

“The United Kingdom’s biggest pension adviser said that tumbling stock markets and economic uncertainty could plunge hundreds of company pension schemes into crisis.”—London dispatch.

Slicing the bread—“Illinois, Carbondale—“The days are gone when Margie Parker could send people home with at least two weeks of staples from her food pantry. Pantries for the poor in Illinois are struggling. Parker’s pantry can provide enough to feed a family for a week. Donations are down from the federal government and private industry alike.”—*USA Today*.

Not squeezed enough?—“About 30 percent of Iowa farmers have signed up for commodity program payments, officials say. Many farmers are hesitating because the program is too complicated, says farmer Matt Peters. Some farmers may have to run computer programs to determine potential crop yields and prices for the program that runs through 2007.”—News item.

Hold your hat—“Industrial output stumbled in December and consumers were glum in early January, economic reports showed.”—News item.

GE ‘stumbled’?—“General Electric Co. said that fourth-quarter profits fell 21 percent, its biggest quarterly decline in nine

years, and that first-quarter earnings would drop as much as 10 percent.”—News brief.

McD sets war weapons—Moving to counter a sales slump and losing ground in a price war with Burger King, McDonald’s is replacing Teenie Beanie Babies with Betty Spaghetti dolls. January 24th, a four-week Happy Meal assault was slated. Also anticipated was the anticipated loss in the fourth quarter—its first ever quarterly loss.

E-mail or snail-mail—In good measure this column is sustained by clippings from readers. Please pass them on to Great Society, c/o Pathfinder Books, 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90006. Fax: 213-380-1268. E-mail: 74642.326@compuserve.com.

U.S.-led Kosova force blocks self-determination

BY SAM MANUEL

As U.S. government officials, anticipating rapid success for their bombers and troops, draw up plans for establishing a U.S.-officered military government in a postwar Iraq, an occupation along similar imperialist lines in Kosova is entering its fourth year.

The occupation was established under the flag of the United Nations, whose representatives promised to supervise a transition to local “self-rule” for the Yugoslav province. But more than three years later, reported the *Wall Street Journal* in December, “virtually all power in the Balkan province continues to reside with the thousands of United Nations administrators who arrived in 1999.” This despite the fact that local elections were held a year ago.

The UN administration—termed UNMIK, or the UN Interim Administration Mission—was put in place after a 78-day NATO bombing campaign by the U.S. air force backed up by its British counterpart. Washington seized upon incursions into Kosova by Serb paramilitary and special military forces to launch the offensive. Using cluster bombs and other explosives, the planes bombed roads, bridges, and working people’s neighborhoods in Serbia, along with targets in Kosova.

The air assault not only laid the basis for the current occupation, it also asserted Washington’s dominant position in relation to its European rivals, particularly France and Germany.

Following Belgrade’s retreat Washington took the lead in dividing Kosova into five zones, one controlled by itself and the others by France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. U.S. forces set up Camp Bondsteel, the largest U.S. military facility in Yugoslavia.

Today a total of some 30,000 NATO-led “KFOR” troops remain in Kosova, around 4,300 of them from the United States, with more in neighboring Macedonia. There are also 4,400 police officers in the province.

In his November report on these troops, U.S. president Bush told Congress that “KFOR coordinates with and supports UNMIK at most levels, provides a security presence in towns, villages and the countryside, and organizes checkpoints and patrols in key areas of Kosovo.”

The UNMIK bureaucracy of 6,300 officials is overseen by Michael Steiner, a former foreign policy adviser to German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. “You need

a boss,” he said. “To think they are ready to take over the whole administration is an illusion.”

UNMIK passes laws without debate, and legislation ratified by the Kosova parliament is invalid without Steiner’s signature. Moreover, reported the *Journal*, Steiner can jail any local resident by executive order and “can change the province’s temporary constitution, [and] veto any decision of the elected authorities. As well, he “has final say on the budget, foreign affairs, security and the vast network of state-owned companies.”

Dictators would be envious

Marek Antoni Nowicki, the UNMIK-appointed ombudsperson whose office handles matters ranging from contested imprisonment to property disputes, observed that “many dictators around the world would be jealous of the powers” Steiner holds.

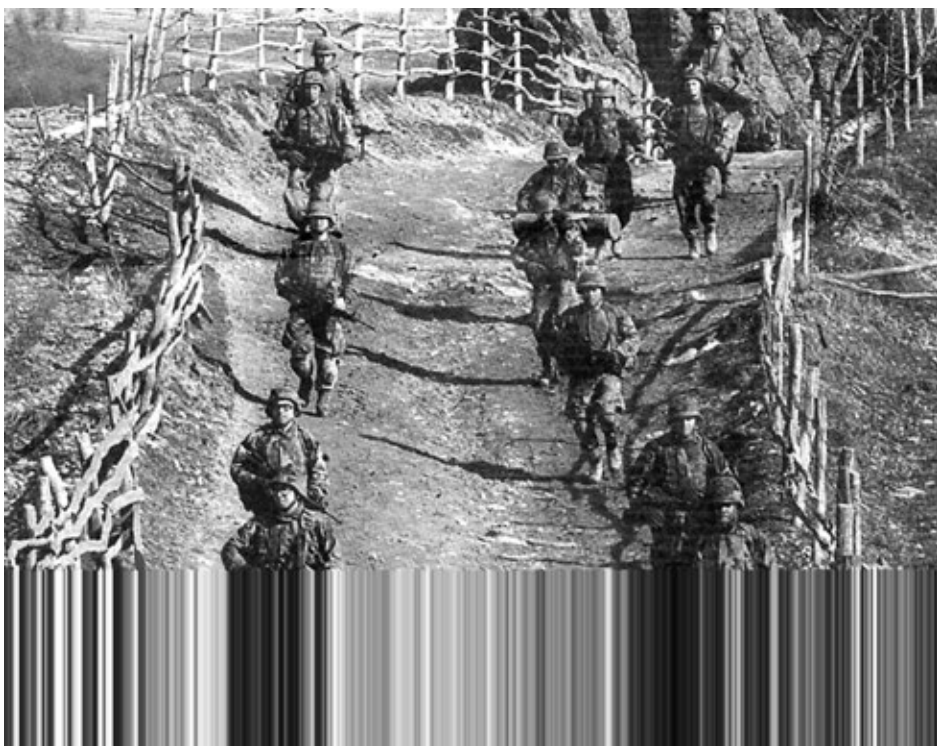
Kosova residents have organized several protests against UNMIK officials, targeting deteriorating public services, growing unemployment—now standing at an estimated 60 percent—and theft from state enterprises and other abuses by UNMIK officials.

These include \$4.5 million taken from a power company; falsification of thousands of land deeds in exchange for money; and a police officer charged with torturing a detainee and making him dig his own grave.

The protests underlined again the fact that the desire for self-determination remains widespread in the province, given its underdevelopment in relation to most of Yugoslavia, and the national discrimination that Albanians face in all facets of social life.

During the 1998 bombing assault U.S. officials, posing as friends of the Albanian struggle, made it clear that they would not bend to the sentiment for self-determination.

Reflecting the stance of the Clinton administration of the day, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman wrote in the middle of the bombing campaign, “We do not want to be formally or implicitly obligated to Kosovo independence, because it would be an endless commitment, because it would send an unrealistic message to Basques, Kurds, and other aggrieved ethnic groups that we will support their independence, and because Albania is already a failed state. It doesn’t need a twin in Kosovo.”



U.S. troops on patrol in Kosova. After a 78-day NATO bombing campaign in 1999, Washington and other imperialist powers established an open-ended occupation.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



February 10, 1978

Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance units around the country have begun focusing their political energies on the campaign to win asylum for political refugee Héctor Marroquín.

SWP and YSA members, along with other supporters of Marroquín’s right to asylum, have begun to establish Héctor Marroquín Defense Committees and started work to build his national speaking tour.

A member of the SWP and YSA, Marroquín has been falsely accused of murder and “subversion” by the Mexican government. The U.S. government is seeking to deport him.

The SWP and YSA in New York City organized a special blitz week January 23-29. “The point was to make Héctor’s case the center of our activities for the week,” said Linda Jenness, SWP local organizer.

“We set out with the idea that every one in the SWP and YSA—whether through their union local, their chapter of the National Organization for Women, on their campus, or in their community—would focus on winning support for the case.

“This approach proved successful in kicking off our Marroquín defense work—which will remain a top priority.”

Two New York branches of the SWP combined their forces for a forum Friday, January 27. The featured speaker was Margaret Winter, Marroquín’s attorney. Winter explained the background of the case and noted the importance of a united defense.

Also speaking was Chinese activist Ken Chin. Entertainment was provided by the Aztlán Players. A collection raised seventy dollars for the defense committee.



February 9, 1953

Eisenhower’s State of the Union message to Congress Feb. 2, whatever its immediate aims, has given the world a glimpse of the Republican administration’s projected course of strategy abroad. And the world has drawn back in horror. Through the carefully couched phrases about “peace,” every politically alert person can see that the real intention is to smash the Chinese revolution that drove capitalist warlord Chiang Kai-shek off China’s mainland and restore the old boundaries in Europe by destroying the non-capitalist states in Eastern Europe.

This is the clear meaning of the general’s two key foreign policy statements: (1) that he is “issuing instructions that the Seventh Fleet no longer be employed to shield Communist China”; and (2) that “this government recognizes no kind of commitment contained in secret understandings of the past with foreign governments which permit...enslavement.”

The first formally repudiates that part of Truman’s executive order, at the start of the Korean war, which stated that the U.S. Seventh Fleet would be sent to Formosa to prevent attacks from the mainland on Formosa. Eisenhower’s policy now openly sanctions and supports military assault on China by Chiang.

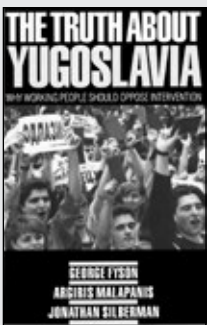
The second statement is obviously aimed at the wartime Yalta and Potsdam agreements between the U.S., British, and Soviet governments to carve up Europe and Asia, assigning Eastern Germany, Eastern Europe including Poland, and Southern Sakhalin Island and the Kuriles north of Japan to the Kremlin’s sphere of influence.

Further reading from Pathfinder

The Truth about Yugoslavia

Why working people should oppose intervention

What are the roots of the carnage in Yugoslavia, where Washington and its imperialist rivals in Europe are intervening militarily in an attempt to reimpose capitalist relations? The answer is not “age-old ethnic and religious conflicts,” as the big-business media say. What is happening in Yugoslavia is a product of the crisis and intensifying conflicts of the depression-ridden world capitalist system. Includes: “Report from Kosova.” \$9.95



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U.S. prepares bloody assault

In his State of the Union speech U.S. president Bush confirmed that his government has sharply stepped up its preparations for war on Iraq. The invasion is weeks, not months, away, say U.S. officials—if everything goes according to their desires.

The Pentagon intends to unleash a bombing offensive that will eclipse the air attacks in the first Gulf War. According to military planners, hundreds of cruise missiles will be launched at Iraq cities, while 1,500 bombers will strike in the first day alone. The ground offensive will be large-scale as well, involving 150,000 troops and more.

We should remember the impact of the U.S.-led war last time—an assault waged on a comparable scale. It is commonly estimated that as many as 150,000 human beings were killed during those six weeks of nonstop air and sea bombardment. The 100 hours of invasion culminated in a bloody massacre—dubbed a “turkey shoot” by U.S. officers—of Iraqi soldiers and others retreating from Kuwait.

Working people are also targets in this war drive. Not only will workers and farmers provide the cannon fodder of this and other wars to come—their rights and legal protections are and will be targeted in the name of protecting “national security.”

The real motivations for what will be a brutal war are also becoming more widely discussed. Plans are in place for U.S. troops to take control of the oil fields as soon as the invasion begins, if not before. The U.S. “occupying power,” in the words of the secretary of state, will run them. The U.S. oil giants are already licking their lips in anticipation of getting their hands on the world’s second-largest deposits.

If U.S. statements and the experience a decade ago are accurate guides, both European governments and oil corporations will be left with slim pickings from a military defeat of Iraq—if that is the outcome. Paris and Berlin rightly fear that a war waged by Washington and London will leave them at an increased disadvantage in their competition with the American giant and its British ally. That is what lies behind their opposition to Washington rolling to war without consulting them. Through the United Nations Security Council they hope to be able to assert their own interests more.

Putting it that way makes it clear that the rulers of Germany and France are not champions of peace or “negotiated settlements”—a pose they frequently strike in

the Middle East. They are pushing their interests as imperialist powers and maneuvering to bring their weight more to bear.

Other imperialist powers, like Britain and Australia, take a different tack, seeking to maximize their gains by contributing to the U.S. war drive. All these powers, large and small, have taken their cue from Washington in accelerating their attacks on workers’ rights under the banner of the “war on terrorism.”

The unfolding scene is confirmation that a coalition as extensive as that assembled for the 1990-91 Gulf War, with a wide range of “allies” lining up behind U.S. power, is ruled out today. Instead, the imperialist powers tend to clash more openly with each other.

This is the world that imperialism—the highest stage of capitalism—is making in the 21st century. A world in which the major imperialist powers increasingly vie with each to gain control of natural resources and armies of cheap labor power. A world marked by trade conflicts and brutal shooting wars, along with increased probes against workers’ rights at home.

The U.S. rulers have the upper hand in this unfolding contest. There is no budding imperialist superpower waiting in the wings to push them out of the driver’s seat. That happened when Washington replaced London as the premier power in the course of two world wars. But not today.

The only alternative lies in the hands of the workers and farmers of the world. It’s the road marked out by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and carved out four decades later by the Cuban Revolution—the only other socialist revolution waged with a revolutionary leadership at the helm. In each case the capitalists were disarmed and toppled from power by the revolutionary action of working people.

Today we see the signs of resistance by working people everywhere to the fronts of the capitalist war, from picket lines, to actions for women’s rights and in defense of affirmative action, to protests against police brutality. Young people in the tens of thousands are looking to find a way to combat the drive to war. It is out of the struggles and experiences of the labor movement and social protests—including the resistance to imperialist wars as they unfold—that working people will forge a revolutionary movement capable of taking on the ruling rich and winning.

Defend right to choose abortion

Rallies, meetings, and conferences in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere insisted that “we won’t go back” from the historic victory for women’s rights and for the unity of working people in the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in 1973.

The ruling was the result of a powerful movement of thousands of women who refused to accept second-class status and won increasing numbers to their side through education and protest. Their fight rose on the shoulders of the civil rights movement and the movement against the U.S. war in Vietnam.

The fight for abortion rights also emerged from the deepgoing changes following World War II as women joined the labor force in ever greater numbers. This trend continues to this day, affecting women’s self-confidence and expectations, and transforming the attitudes of men.

Leaders of middle-class organizations for women’s rights have sounded an alarmist note following the Republican successes in last year’s elections. “We may soon find ourselves memorializing *Roe v. Wade*,” said Gloria Feldt, the president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

But *Roe v. Wade* cannot just be legislated away by anti-choice lawmakers. The ruling was a product of big struggles and deep social changes that have left a mark on social consciousness. That is reflected in the declining minority of those who oppose access to abortion. To launch a frontal assault on the right to choose abortion would be to pick a fight the rulers cannot be confident of winning.

What the Republicans and Democrats alike have done is to chip away over more than two decades at the avail-

ability of abortion services and funding. Parental consent and waiting-period laws have the same impact, especially for younger women. The impact of these restrictions falls particularly hard on women of the working class and the oppressed nationalities.

These attacks are part of a broader offensive that the U.S. employing class has waged in that same period—against wages, job conditions, workers’ rights, and unions. Accompanying that has been an ideological offensive aimed at deepening divisions among working people.

Affirmative action has been a target of bipartisan attacks just like the right to choose abortion. The aim is not to turn women or Blacks out of the workforce, but to undermine the consciousness, confidence, and combativity of these layers of the working class and weaken the working class as a whole.

With the decline of the women’s movement and of the abortion rights struggle—with important exceptions like the mobilizations to defend abortion clinics during the 1980s and 1990s—the rulers are emboldened to keep pressing along this course.

The fight to defend women’s right to choose and to overcome other aspects of discrimination is linked to broader labor struggles. Only by standing alongside the women’s movement of the future and by taking up such demands of the oppressed can the unions, fighters for Black rights and other social forces forge a fighting unity—the sort of strength that is necessary to reinforce all organizations of the working class. The fight to hold the ground of *Roe v. Wade* and to make progress from there is a key issue in such a course.

Why antiwar protests don’t stop wars

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

In his letter printed on the facing page Joe Lombardo asks about the *Militant* coverage of the antiwar protests. Along with “international pressure,” such mobilizations, he says, are “all that is stopping the launching of war” by the U.S. government.

Last week’s *Militant* included a news article about the January 18 protests in Washington, D.C., San Francisco, and elsewhere. It also carried reports on the interested and often eager response by many marchers to revolutionary literature. The Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party literature tables were busy scenes of discussions about the war drive at home and abroad and its linkage to the economic crisis of imperialism.

An account of a Young Socialists event in D.C., organized around the title of “The Young Socialists and the

REPLY TO A READER

Fight against Imperialism and its Wars,” was also featured.

The socialists explained that the drive to war is not an optional but a necessary course by the imperialists, with those in the United States to the fore, as they act to defend their interests. They are pressing to gain a bigger share of the resources of the semicolonial world—including the massive oil wealth of the Middle East. War and military occupation are the accompaniments to this drive.

Wars and depression are the outlook provided by this system. Such developments go hand in hand with a push against workers’ rights, as the bosses and their government seek to carve more profits from working people and to curtail our ability to fight back.

On the face of it, it’s clearly not true that the protests have thus far stopped the launching of war. Washington has moved steadily and ruthlessly to put together the troops and equipment for an invasion. Now that most of what they need is in place, U.S. officials are beating the drums more loudly.

We also shouldn’t forget that the air war has already begun: U.S. and British planes have stepped up their bombing of Iraq’s so-called “no-fly” zones. They are deliberately targeting the country’s air defenses.

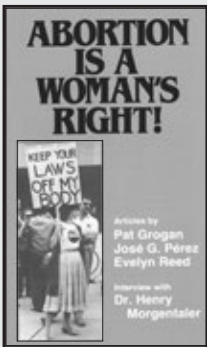
Antiwar protests have never by themselves stopped the imperialists’ march to war. We shouldn’t draw the wrong lessons from the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. Washington was defeated by the workers and peasants of Indochina, who waged a heroic and increasingly large-scale war against the most brutal and heavily armed power the world has ever seen. The antiwar protests and the defeatist moods that penetrated the armed forces were important allies in that revolutionary fight.

At present the large antiwar protests have a pacifist stamp characteristic of a pre-war period. Alongside the capitalist politicians and liberal forces, who will fall in behind the war effort when the shooting starts, are many young people looking for a way to respond effectively to the brutality of capitalism.

The *Militant* aims to provide factual coverage of the war buildup and to explain scientifically the foundations of the war drive. We also explain that out of the struggles of today and tomorrow, including the fight against imperialist war, working people will go through the defeats and victories necessary to forge a revolutionary movement. Only by overthrowing their rule can the capitalists be disarmed and the drive to war be stopped.



U.S. troops in Kuwaiti desert practice bunker training January 27. Washington has stepped up its preparations for launching a military invasion on Iraq.



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Cop killings anger Pittsburgh protesters

Continued from front page consciousness.

Under pressure the police department has admitted that up to eight cops were involved in subduing the man, and that they had used the suffocating and painful spray.

Following Dixon’s death, however, the local county police superintendent said, “everything was done according to the book.” He claimed that “there’s no racial issue between my officers and people on the street” and that there have been no allegations of racism or police brutality in the past seven years.

Members of Dixon’s family spoke at the rally, along with Tim Stevens, president of the Pittsburgh chapter of the NAACP, and Sala Udin, a Pittsburgh city council member. Speakers described other fights against police brutality. Among those who addressed the crowd were the widow of a man shot by police and a local boxer who had been beaten and framed up.

Leading up to the rally and march, planning meetings were organized in a number of Pittsburgh neighborhoods, including St. Clair Village, Hill District, Knoxville, Homewood, and East Liberty.

The rally and protest also exposed and protested ongoing harassment and brutality by Mt. Oliver cops.

Greg Trent, one of the pastors who spoke, told the rally how his sons were detained and beaten by the local cops. A woman who had been recently laid off by US Airways described being assaulted and jailed after a minor traffic accident.

Many participants, both Black and white, related incidents of harassment and brutality to this reporter.

Michael Ellerbe shot in the back

Other killings have occurred elsewhere in Pittsburgh. On December 24, 12-year-old Michael Ellerbe was shot through the heart from behind in broad daylight by state police in Uniontown, 45 miles southeast of the city in the southwestern Pennsylvania coalfields. Police allege that at the time

Japan report

Continued from Page 4 on the use of troops abroad.

The rulers have been partly motivated by the experience of the Gulf War, in which they forked over to Washington more than \$13 billion toward the cost of the U.S.-led and organized invasion.

Like the other imperialist powers, Tokyo has used the so-called war on terror as a propaganda basis to begin to step up its intervention abroad. In December the Navy sent the Aegis-equipped guided missile destroyer *Kirishima* to the Indian Ocean. At Washington’s urging, Tokyo had already stationed destroyers, a minesweeper, and supply ships in the region, in step with the U.S. assault on Afghanistan in November 2001.

Earlier smaller-scale military forays abroad have frequently been organized as part of United Nations missions. Nearly 700 troops were sent to East Timor last year. “Non-combat” soldiers have been dispatched to Cambodia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Indonesia, and the Golan Heights.

“The dispatch of noncombatant troops to the ISAF (International Security Force) in Afghanistan” is a more recent example cited approvingly by the task force.

Japan has one of the world’s largest standing armies with some 250,000 troops and a yearly military budget of \$45 billion—the highest among imperialist countries after the United States. Its naval lineup includes 54 destroyers, 16 submarines, 29 auxiliary ships, 8 landing vessels, and 3 patrol combat aircraft.

The Japanese government’s discussion on foreign policy comes as an economic crisis continues to pummel the country. Last year corporate bankruptcies reached their second highest level in 60 years. The banking crisis still choking the economy was registered by the January 21 announcement of Mizuho Holdings, one of the world’s largest banks by assets, that it expects to lose \$16.5 billion for the fiscal year ending March 31. This was reported to be the worst result in Japanese corporate history.

Ellerbe was at the wheel of a stolen vehicle. He died in an alley.

The lawyer for the Ellerbe family, Geoffrey Fieger, said, “I think it’s a cover-up. Nothing precipitated it. I think it’s a deliberate act that is absolutely unexplainable and undefendable ... I don’t think this would happen to a white child ... Since when do you start shooting a suspected car thief in the back?”

The Fayette County NAACP chapter has called for Black representation at the coroner’s inquest.

Citing an ongoing investigation, the state police have not released details of the case, and have refused to acknowledge whether it was a bullet from a trooper’s gun that killed Ellerbe. They have also declined to discuss their policy on the use of force.

On November 15 Bernard Rogers died at the hands of Housing Authority cops in the Bedford Dwellings in Pittsburgh’s Hill District. The cops who shot Rogers claimed that they acted after a struggle over one of their guns.

Witnesses reported that Rogers was shot while running downstairs to get away. Rogers’s mother, Joyce Rogers, told reporters, “I believe they murdered my son and

Washington state teachers in ‘Day of Action’

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

OLYMPIA, Washington—Wearing blue ponchos stamped “Keep the Commitment,” 25,000 teachers and their supporters marched on the state capitol on January 14. The half-mile march and rally, part of a statewide Day of Action, demanded that lawmakers implement two election ballot initiatives that had passed with overwhelming support.

One directed them to reduce average class sizes, while the other proposed cost-of-living raises for Washington state teachers.

Smaller rallies were held in Kennewick and Spokane.

The Day of Action was called by the Washington Education Association (WEA), representing 75,000 school staff. It was supported and built by organizations representing parents, school principals, school board members, and administrators. Some school superintendents also endorsed it.

Other unions came in behind the pro-



Militant/Tony Lancaster

Marchers in Pittsburgh January 20 demand justice in cop killing of 12-year-old Michael Ellerbe and others. The demonstration spotlighted police harassment and brutality.

are trying to cover it up. But the body doesn’t lie.” She said the coroner’s findings support the witnesses’ account that Rogers was shot from above.

The inquest has brought into the spotlight a practice of the Housing Authority cops called “knock and talk,” in which cops approach visitors to the housing complexes or knock on doors of tenants when they suspect criminal activity. In the November shooting, witnesses testified that cops identified themselves only as “housing” when they entered the apartment.

test. Among them was the Service Employees International Union, which sent a busload of school janitors to Olympia. Members of a number of other unions were also present, many of whom had traveled several hours to join the action.

According to the *Seattle Times*, the Day of Action closed schools in the majority of districts. Teachers at a number of schools that stayed open sent delegations to the protest. In the Northshore district, association members sent one “community member” for each of the district’s 110 teachers.

Claims of budget shortfall

State legislators are claiming budget woes as they stall on putting the voted-for changes into effect. “We simply do not have the money at this time,” Governor Gary Locke wrote to the teachers on January 14. The day before the rally Locke proposed to suspend the cost-of-living raise for two years and delay the increased funds needed to reduce class sizes for kindergartens through 12th grade schools.

Inquests on the Ellerbe and Dixon deaths are set for January 29 and February 12 respectively. The inquest into Bernard Rogers’s killing has already begun. The FBI has agreed to investigate all three deaths.

Speaking at the January 20 rally in Mt. Oliver, Renee Wilson vowed that opponents of the police actions “will attend every legal proceeding” in the killings, “will picket police stations where there’s evidence of abuse, will march around the courthouse, will march on downtown and Uniontown, and will organize meetings in every area.”

The *Seattle Times* reported that Locke’s proposals would “save about \$550 million” as part of a \$650 million cut in school spending to “balance the state budget.” Claiming that “by sticking together and sacrificing together, we will get through these tough times,” Locke is also proposing slashing spending on higher education, parks, social and health services, and health care insurance coverage for workers. Wages for other state employees would be frozen at present levels.

Two days after the Day of Action outpouring, the Seattle School District warned of possible layoffs of teachers and administrators owing to a projected \$11.5 million deficit in its 2004 budget.

District officials say the shortfall is the result of the teachers contract, along with higher utility rates and cuts in state funding. Schools that are “less efficient to operate” may be the first to go, they threatened.

Ernest Mailhot contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Antiwar movement

I don’t understand why the *Militant* has so little coverage of the growing anti-war movement. This, along with the international pressure, is all that is stopping the launching of war.

Trade unionists are joining the anti-war mobilizations in great numbers causing their unions to take positions against the war. Many people are drawing far reaching conclusions about the nature of this capitalist government as it pushes forward with its aggression against Iraq with only paper thin lies about its reasons.

This is an important atmosphere in which socialists can make gains and explain the true nature of the state. The movement has already played a part in staying the hand of the U.S. government, allowing increased exposure of its motives. I believe that this has also caused some rifts in the ruling class, as can be seen by the increased press coverage of the January anti-war actions as compared to past demonstrations. So, why does the *Militant* act as if the anti-war movement is of little importance?

*Joe Lombardo
Delmar, New York*

Orangutan culture?

A recent article in the *New York Times* caught my eye and revealed the continuing crisis in the scientific fields of Anthropology, Biology, and Primatology. The article’s title was “Scientists say Orangutans can exhibit ‘Culture’” and went on to report that “According to the research reported in the journal *Science*, they (Orangutans) exhibit

what was until very recently considered a uniquely human attribute, culture.” Further on the report quotes an “expert” in primatology, “In the coming 20 years...we will not think of culture as a monolithic thing, but a concept that includes songbirds, the great apes and human culture.”

Attempts such as this to erase the gulf between animal existence and human society are deeply reactionary and all too common today in a number of scientific fields. Pathfinder books by Evelyn Reed, like *Sexism and Science*, are some of the best sources for those who are looking for a scientific explanation for the development and evolution of human society and culture, and the vast differences that demarcate the evolution of humanity from all other animal species.

Perhaps during Women’s History Month you can run an article or two taking up studies like this one and Reed’s arguments against them.

*Mike Galati
New York, New York*

Hospital protests

The plan of the Liberal government of British Columbia, Canada, to fire thousands of hospital workers and replace them with contractors paying poverty level wages is meeting growing resistance. For three consecutive Wednesdays beginning January 8, members of the Hospital Employees’ Union at the province’s largest hospital, Vancouver General, have staged marches and demonstrations.

January 28 marks the one year anniversary of the Liberal government’s passage of Bill 29 which tore out from health care labour agreements any protection against contracting out. Hospital workers at Vancouver General will mark this day with two more lunch break marches and by wearing blue arm bands.

*Mike Barker,
Vancouver, British Columbia*

Supermarket picket

Over 50 people picketed the Assi Supermarket in Los Angeles’ Koreatown on January 25 to publicize a boycott which will continue until 60 workers are reinstated. Although Assi claims the August 1 dismissal of those Latino and Korean workers was because of their lack of valid Social Security cards, the selective firings took place in the context of an organizing drive by the Immigrant Workers Union.

Those participating in the picket were urged to join a February 1 picket in Santa Monica at Forever 21, a maker of women’s fashions targeted for a boycott because of its refusal to pay back wages.

*Barry Schier
Los Angeles, California*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

London: 40,000 troops for Iraq war

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—British defense secretary Geoffrey Hoon has announced that Londoner will send more than 40,000 troops to the Arab-Persian Gulf in preparation for waging war on Iraq. This is the biggest such deployment since the 1990–91 Gulf War.

The announcement came in a week that witnessed renewed strike action by firefighters, a series of large-scale police raids against immigrants, and a steep drop in share values on the London stock exchange, down to its lowest level in seven years. On January 23 share prices stood at barely half their peak in 1999.

A quarter of the British army would be involved, Hoon told the parliament. The commitment would include an armored division of 20,000 soldiers. Some 6,000 troops of the Air Assault Brigade would join 4,000 Royal Marine commandos already on the way. Added to this are 5,000 navy personnel, and a doubling of the 3,000 air force personnel currently assigned to the “no-fly” zones in Iraq.

Military vehicles will include 120 battle tanks, 150 armored personnel carriers, and 50 artillery pieces. Helicopters and anti-tank units are also on their way. The naval force comprises a six-ship battle group headed by the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal*, with 16 Harrier jets and six helicopters, and includes a destroyer, a frigate, and a submarine equipped with Tomahawk cruise missiles.

“This is a lot of kit (military equipment),” said a government official. “You do not send a force of this size and complexity just to send a diplomatic signal. If necessary, they will fight.”

The “military now believe that war is inevitable,” said one officer to the conser-

vative *Daily Telegraph*. “Very soon Britain will have 20,000 troops in the Gulf and the United States will have well over 100,000. I can’t see them returning to Britain or America without being involved in some sort of action, whether or not there is UN [United Nations] backing.”

While prominent government officials, including Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and Prime Minister Anthony Blair, meet with their U.S. counterparts, the UK’s Chief of General Staff, Admiral Michael Boyce, has visited Turkey to press for access to the country’s bases for British troops. Since 1991, U.S. and British planes have been flying daily patrols, including frequent bombing runs, over northern Iraq out of the Incirlik air base in south-central Turkey.

Former colonial power

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Blair has made a series of high profile statements priming public opinion for an assault. On January 13 he said that while it preferred to walk “the UN route”—as demanded by the French and German governments—London was prepared to act in tandem with the United States and without a UN resolution.

Blair said that after Iraq, the UN would have to take action “systematically” against other “rogue states,” including north Korea, alleging that the workers state had torn up international agreements on nuclear weapons.

Blair also answered critics who attack the government’s close alliance with the U.S. government, and who have gone so far as to describe the prime minister as “Washington’s poodle.” London needs its special relationship with Washington in or-

der to strengthen the UK as it competes with its imperialist rivals, especially in Europe. Defending his own nationalist credentials, he said, “I know there are a lot of criticisms of the relationship with the U.S., but I will defend that relationship absolutely and solidly, because I believe it is important for us and for the wider world.”

In offering its backing to Blair’s stance, the traditionally pro-Conservative Party *Daily Telegraph* referred to Britain’s past and present role as a colonial and imperialist power. “Saddam directly threatens our interests and our allies,” the January 14 *Telegraph* read. “His plans for regional hegemony menace some of our oldest friends: Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain and the UAE (United Arab Emirates.) His Scud missiles are within range of our sovereign bases in Cyprus....

“We have long-standing interests in Iraq itself as the former colonial power and, later, the chief patron of the Hashemite regime,” continued the big-business paper, referring to the monarchy that was overthrown in a popular revolution in 1958. “We have intervened militarily in Mesopotamia five times since 1914, and on only one of these occasions—the Gulf war—did we act with the United States. We have a direct interest in ensuring that, post-Saddam, Iraq is again friendly toward the United Kingdom.”

Attacks on immigrants, workers’ rights

At the same time the government has unleashed the police on immigrants, using the so-called war on “domestic terrorism” to attack broader workers’ rights.

Blair seized on the cops’ claims of having discovered traces of ricin, a toxic chemical, in a north London apartment to



British Royal Marines training aboard warship in Arab-Persian Gulf.

defend proposals to introduce a national identification card. Describing as “inevitable” an attack on the UK by al-Qaeda, the prime minister said that the “first line of defense is security and intelligence.”

Home Secretary David Blunkett echoed the theme. “I have authorized the security and intelligence service and our anti-terrorism branch to take whatever steps are necessary, controversial or otherwise, without fear or favor to take action to protect us,” he told the BBC.

Government officials publicly backed a January 20 raid at 2:00 a.m. by 150 police on a north London mosque. The cops used battering rams and ladders to gain access as police helicopters, hovering overhead, raked the scene with searchlights. Documents, passports, identity and credit cards were seized, along with a stun gun, a replica firearm, and a tear gas canister.

Of the seven men arrested, six were described as “North African” and one as “East European.”

Since September 2001 more than 200 people, the majority of them of Algerian origin, have been detained in Britain under legislation allowing the security authorities to detain non-Britons without trial.

While the measures were enacted in the wake of the September 11 attacks, their use has stepped up since last November. Government ministers and the media have chimed in with a propaganda blitz against immigrants. Blunkett described the tension around the increase of asylum seekers as a “coiled spring.” The *Sun* newspaper has launched a public petition demanding the government take further measures to limit these working people from making applications for residency, complaining that “terrorists walk free in our own country.”

An even larger-scale raid was carried out in north London on January 21 when 550 cops entered houses, grocer shops, and clubs in the hunt for alleged members of “Turkish heroin and gambling gangs.”

Meanwhile, the government, appealing to the need for national security and vigilance against “terrorism,” has used the drive to war against Iraq to attempt to inflame patriotic public sentiment against the firefighters engaged in industrial action over jobs and wages (see article below.) Ministers have accused the firefighters of jeopardizing the armed forces’ “operational capabilities.”

London has deployed 19,000 troops as strikebreakers in an attempt to defeat the union. “The impact on those 19,000 who are engaged in fire fighting means they are not engaged in what they should be doing,” said Hoon. Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott called on the firefighters to abandon their January 20 strike “at a time of heightened concern about terrorism.”

UK firefighters stage 24-hour strike

BY REBECCA HUTCHINSON

SCOTLAND, United Kingdom—More than 50,000 firefighters in the United Kingdom (UK) walked picket lines and blocked fire station entrances as they took part in a 24-hour national strike starting at 9:00 a.m. on January 21. This was the eleventh day of strike action since late last year by members of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). Their battle began over a demand for a 40 percent pay increase from the Fire Service employers, and has become a fight to defend jobs and maintain the quality of fire fighting services.

The centrality of the defense of jobs to the firefighters was underlined at a meeting on January 8 between FBU officials and representatives of the Local Government Association (LGA)—the firefighters’ employers. Basing their position on the proposals issued by a government commission chaired by Sir George Bain, the LGA called for cuts to 4,500 jobs and the closure of 150 fire stations.

The government cited the Bain commission’s “modernization” recommendations last November, when it vetoed a settlement reached by the FBU and the employers that combined a 16 percent wage increase with negotiations on “working practices.”

The UK government mobilized some 19,000 armed forces personnel to operate their own fleet of fire trucks during the January 21 strike, as they have done for previous stoppages. The strike-breaking force included 3,000 troops from the Royal Navy and 3,000 from the Royal Air Force.

Politicians from both sides of parliament weighed in against the firefighters in the lead-up to the action. The stoppage would “achieve nothing,” said Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott on the day of the strike. The only framework for a settlement was the Bain proposals, he said.

David Davis, a leader of the Conservative Party opposition, called on the gov-



Militant/Jim Spaul

Firefighters rally at Hyde Park in London December 7. Workers’ battle for pay increase has evolved into struggle to defend union, jobs, and firefighting capacity.

ernment to seek an injunction to stop the strikes. The army must be at maximum strength, he said, in the context of the drive to war on Iraq and the threat of “terrorist” attacks at home. Shadow Tory defense secretary Bernard Jenkin called the firefighters “a bunch of idiots.... You are a disgrace to your country.”

In spite of these attacks, the strike was solid throughout the United Kingdom. Committees at a number of fire stations organized to get out the union’s point of view by leafleting local shopping centers.

Not just a pay campaign

In Elgin, firefighter Steve Barker explained, “It’s not just a pay campaign any longer. They are looking at all aspects of the fire service which could mean job cuts, job losses, and station closures.”

Earlier this month the Scottish Parliament voted down an attempt by the Scottish Executive to repeal section 19 of the 1947 Fire Services Act. Such a move would have permitted fire authorities to change staff numbers and equipment without ministerial approval, potentially leading to job cuts and fire station closures.

As the union prepared for two 48-hour strikes planned for January 28 and February 1, talks between the FBU and the employers took place at the union’s request at the offices of the ACAS conciliation service on January 23 and 24. The firefighters are organizing a February 1 march and rally in Glasgow that will be addressed by union general secretary Andy Gilchrist. The march assembles at noon at Blytheswood Square, from where it will proceed to a rally in George Square.